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BY THE
REV. SIR G. W. COX, BART., M.A.,
AUTHOR OF 'A HISTORY OF GREECE,' 'THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE ARYAN NATIONS,'
ETC. ETC

Illustrated by Gunston and other Artists.

LONDON: JOSEPH HUGHES,
PILGRIM STREET, LUDGATE HILL, E.C.

1882

228.f.78



MORRISON AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.



PREFACE.



EXPERIENCE has abundantly justified the opinion of Dr. Arnold, that for young children history should be thrown as far as may be possible into a biographical form. Nor can there be a doubt that a large amount of sound historical knowledge can be imparted by means of stories, dealing chiefly with personal character, and with the actions of individual men.

The present volume may, I hope, serve this purpose. The stories contained in it may all be read separately; but, taken in order, they will be found to give, for practical purposes, a connected account of the leading events of earlier English history, from which the reader will at the least, I trust, have nothing to unlearn.

Of the stories here given, the greater number are certainly historical, some few are doubtful, and a few, again, are in greater or less degree fictions. In each case the reasons are given for assigning them to their several classes; and the youngest child whose attention is drawn to these remarks can scarcely fail

to learn from them the main principles of historical criticism long before he is able to express them exactly.

More particularly, these tales may serve, I hope, to impress upon the reader's mind the broad distinctions between English history before the Norman Conquest and English history subsequent to the Conquest. They are distinctions without which it is impossible to explain the defeat of Harold at Hastings or Senlac, or the difficulties of which the Conqueror's relations with the Pope were the direct and immediate cause. But if they are clearly understood, they will throw a flood of light on the social and political growth of this country, and on a vast number of incidents in English history, of which many still have strangely confused and distorted notions.

Of the old English names I have given the common form, adding in brackets the old English form, as 'Elgiva (*Ælfgifu*). It is well that even the youngest readers should know that the modern is not the true form of the name.





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STORIES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.



LESSON I.

HENGIST AND VORTIGERN.

History does not begin with landing of Julius Cæsar—Stories of Caractacus, Boadicea, and King Arthur—Perhaps not true—Welshmen descendants of Boadicea—English came from Germany—Fetch Rowena—Vortigern marries her—Hengist asks for land—Britons killed—Story probably not true.

THE history of England does not begin with the landing of Julius Cæsar and his Roman soldiers on the Kentish coast. We cannot, therefore, take the stories told to us of his coming, or of all the events which followed his coming for the next four hundred years or more, as having anything to do with the fortunes of the English people.

We read of the great bravery of Caradoc, whom the Romans called Caractacus; and of the vengeance which the queen Boadicea (or

8 STORIES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

Boduc) took for the wrongs which Roman soldiers had done to her and to her children; and we may have heard of the victories and the glory of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

But we cannot really say that Arthur and his knights lived at all; and although Caradoc



Stonehenge, in Wiltshire (a supposed Druidical temple).

and Boadicea really lived, we know that they were not English. We must carefully remember this, for in history, as in everything else, nothing is more needful than truth, and nothing is more mischievous than falsehood, if we say what is false knowing it to be false.

In his verses on Boadicea, the poet Cowper

represents a Druid as cheering her with the thought that—

‘Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway ;
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they.’

Cowper was thinking of the greatness and the conquests of the English nation ; but he was quite mistaken in thinking that the English are sprung from Boadicea or her people. The fact is, that the English were the conquerors or destroyers of her people, to whom they gave the name of Welshmen, calling their country Wales.

The English came to this island in the fifth century, with some other German tribes, soon after the Romans left it ; but the Britons or Kymry, or, as they called them, the Welshmen, were not what they had been when they fought with the trained soldiers of the great Roman general, Julius Cæsar. Their chief, Vortigern, was glad to make use of some Saxons, who had landed on his coasts in three ships, to defend him against his enemies from the north.

The story is told that when the German strangers felt their strength, they went back to their old land, and returned with many more warriors, bringing with them Rowena, the daughter of Hengist, the brother of Horsa.

Hengist, who had built himself a great house in the isle of Thanet, invited Vortigern to a banquet, in which Rowena served him with wine. Vortigern was so struck by her beauty that he married her, and made her father lord of the Kentish land ; but his son Vortimer hated the Saxons, and fought with them, and drove them across the sea.

So Hengist and his people roved about in search of plunder until Vortimer died, and then he came back to ask for the lands which had been given to him long ago.

A time was fixed when they were to meet and see what should be done ; but Hengist had told his men to come armed with their daggers, which they called seaxe, and to kill the Britons when he should cry out, 'Nemeth yure seaxe.' All were killed except Vortigern, who now gave much more land to Hengist, so that the Saxon strangers became a strong people.

It is not strange that such a story as this should spring up, although it is quite untrue. The countrymen of Vortigern would not like their own weakness and want of spirit to be known, and so they would be glad to dress up a tale which would show that the German warriors were at first settled here peaceably and without any fighting. But the story is not known to the earliest writers, even on the side of the British

themselves, and therefore we may put it away as worthless.

Caractacus , a British chief	invincible , cannot be con-
Boadicea , a British queen	quered
Thanet , an island north-	peaceably , quietly
east of Kent	falsehood , untruth
Hengist and Horsa , Saxon	posterity , those coming
leaders	after, succeeding genera-
vengeance , punishment in	tions
return for injury	'Nemeth yure seaxe,'
mischievous , hurtful	Take your daggers

victories	conquerors	warriors	earliest
carefully	destroyers	daughter	worthless
regions	century	countrymen	enemies





LESSON 2.

THE ENGLISH CHILDREN IN THE ROMAN SLAVE-MARKET.

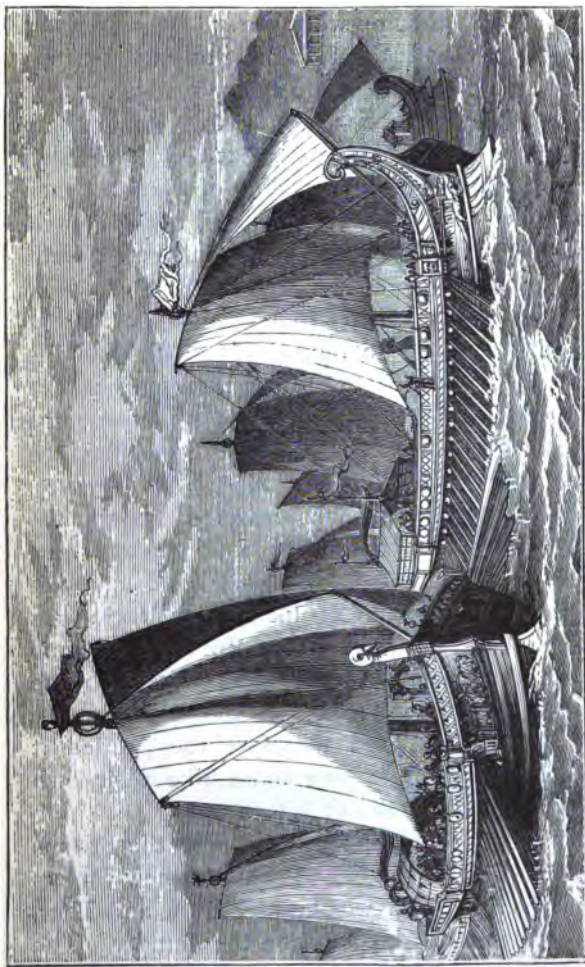
PART I.

English a German tribe—Called Teutons—Different from Celts, but of same stock originally—How different—English were pagans—Gregory decides to come to England—Saw English children in slave-market—His questions and the replies.

WHEN we say that the people who invaded this island after the Romans went away belonged to a German tribe, we mean that they were of the same race with the peoples of Germany and of Holland.

They are also called Teutons ; but the name Teuton is only another form of the word Dutch, and we speak of the people of Holland as Dutchmen, and the Germans call themselves and their language Deutsch.

All these people are quite distinct from the Celtic nations, some of whom possessed this island long before the Romans first tried to



Roman war-ships.

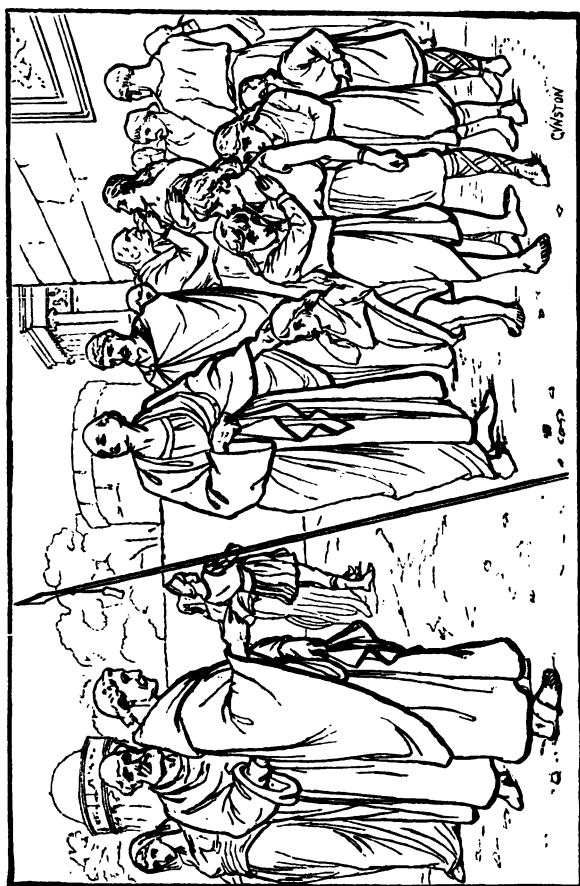
land on it, although, when we go back very far indeed, we find that both Celts and Teutons are sprung from the same stock.

All that we mean by saying that people belong to different races is, that they have lived so long apart from other tribes of the same race as to have a different language, and different customs and laws, and probably also a different religion.

So too when we say that they have different languages, we mean only that the difference is such that if they try to talk together they cannot understand each other, although when we come to examine their forms of speech we may see very clearly that they all come from one source.

So when the Romans invaded Britain, the language of the people whom they found here seemed to them a barbarous jargon, although it had many points of likeness to their own Latin. And when, after the Romans had gone away, the English thrust themselves into the island, *they* could not understand the language of the Britons, and therefore they called it Welsh, although it was more like their own English than it was like Latin.

While the Romans remained here, the Britons became Christians ; but the English new-comers were heathen, and worshipped Odin and Thor, the gods of the heaven and the thunder. The



The English children in the Roman slave-market.

bad news that this island had become pagan, when the English had driven out or killed the Britons, was carried to Rome, the great Italian city to which Julius Cæsar belonged, and which was now ruled by its bishop, who is generally called the Pope.

After some time, when Æthelbert was king of Kent, the Pope, whom for his wisdom and goodness the people called Gregory the Great, determined to go himself and convert them.

He had wished to do this, we are told, long before he became Pope; and the story says that he had wished this ever since in the slave-market at Rome he had seen some English boys, with fair faces, and blue eyes, and light hair, waiting to be sold. Struck by their beauty, Gregory asked whence they came, and on being told that they had been brought from Britain, he asked whether their kinsfolk were Christians.

When he learnt that they were heathens, he was grieved for the bad fortune which plunged into spiritual darkness creatures so beautiful in their outward form.

To his next question, asking what they were called, the answer given was that they were Angles.

‘Well are they so called,’ he said, ‘because they look like angels, and they shall stand hereafter among the angels in heaven.’

‘And what,’ he asked again, ‘is the part of Britain from which the lads have been brought?’

‘From the kingdom of Deira,’ was the reply.

‘Yes,’ he said, ‘the promise of this name too shall be fulfilled. They shall be delivered *de ira Dei*, from the wrath of God, and called to the mercy of Christ. And what,’ he added, ‘is the name of their king?’

‘He is called Ælla,’ they said.

‘Be it so,’ answered the monk, ‘the song of Alleluia must be heard in his land.’

Romans, people of Italy	barbarous, uncivilised,
Celts, the original inhabitants of the British Islands	savage
Latin, the language of the ancient Romans	jargon, confused talk
convert, change	source, beginning
	pagan, heathen
	determined, made up his mind

difference	distinct	Christians	kinsfolk
peoples	probably	worshipped	heathen
language	examine	generally	grieved





LESSON 3.

THE ENGLISH CHILDREN IN THE ROMAN SLAVE-MARKET.

PART II.

The Pope refuses to let Gregory visit Britain—Gregory is chosen Pope—Resolves to send Augustine and other monks—They turn back—Sent again—Land in Kent—Walk to Canterbury—Augustine first archbishop.

FROM the slave-market Gregory hastened to the Pope, to obtain his leave for going to Britain to convert the heathen Angles or English. But the Pope said that he could not be spared, and Gregory went back and waited quietly in his monastery until he was chosen Pope himself (A.D. 590).

The wish to rescue the English from heathenism had become stronger in his heart than ever; but he was made to see that he could not leave the city of which he was now the bishop.

So he resolved to send a monk named Augustine, who set out with some other monks

on the journey through Italy and Gaul to the island which was now the home of the English.

But they had scarcely gone more than half the way when they became frightened, and shrank from the hardships which they might have to bear. So Augustine went back to Gregory, and begged that he would release them from this task.

‘No,’ said Gregory, ‘this must not be. Most gladly would I go with you, if I could; but as I cannot, you must go on with the work. To look back after putting your hand to the plough is a sin.’

The Pope gave Augustine letters to bishops and princes who might help him on the road; and at last the missionaries found themselves in the Kentish land, of which Æthelbert was king.

From Dover they walked to Canterbury, and we are told that as they entered the city they sang this litany: ‘We beseech Thee, O Lord, in Thy mercy, that Thy anger and wrath be turned away from this city, and from Thy holy house, for we are sinners. Hallelujah.’

And so was the promise of Ælla’s name fulfilled in the country of the fair youths whom Gregory pitied and loved in the slave-market at Rome.

Whether things happened just as this beautiful

story says that they happened, we cannot say. But we know that the men of Kent were first invited to become Christians by the monk Augustine, whom Pope Gregory sent from Italy (A.D. 596), and who became the first archbishop of Canterbury.

monastery, the home of	heathenism, having no true
monks	knowledge of God
release, set them free	litany, a prayer
missionaries, persons sent	resolved, determined
to preach to the heathen	

hastened	beautiful	frightened	plough
fulfilled	archbishop	journey	youths
happened	pitied	Augustine	beseech





LESSON 4.

ÆTHELBERT AND AUGUSTINE.

PART I.

Monks wish to preach—King willing to allow them—Receives them, and replies to their invitation—Æthelbert becomes a Christian—Augustine asks help of the British bishops—They refuse to join him—He works a miracle.

NEARLY a hundred and fifty years had passed away since the days of Vortigern and Hengist, when Æthelbert, the chief of the Kentish men, was told that some Roman monks were in the isle of Thanet, and besought his leave to come and preach to him and to his people the good tidings of the love of God in the redemption of the world.

Æthelbert was well disposed to grant this prayer, for he had married a princess of the Franks, from whom the country of France has its name, and this princess, who was called Bertha, worshipped God in the Church of St. Martin at Canterbury.

But he would not allow them to come to him in his house, for he was afraid that there they might bewitch him with magical arts. So he had a chair placed for himself in the open air, and there he welcomed the strangers, who came holding up a silver cross as their standard, and the image of Christ painted on a board.

But when Augustine urged him to become a Christian, Æthelbert said that he could not do so all at once. 'Your words,' he told the monks, 'are very fair, and your promises are very good ; but I cannot on a sudden forsake the religion of the whole English people, nor can I do so at all until I am convinced that this religion is false, and that your religion is true. But as you have come a long way, and as we believe that you have come wishing to do us good, we receive you as friends, and will give you all that you need for your support ; and, further, you may speak to any of my people, and win them to your faith, if you are able to do so.'

With these words the missionaries were well content. The Kentish men flocked to hear them preach, and many of them became Christians.

At last the king followed their example ; and then Augustine resolved to invite the bishops of the conquered Britons or Welshmen to join him in the work of teaching and converting the English.

We cannot tell whether the story is told to us exactly as the things happened ; but although the British Christians would have acted more nobly if they had tried to teach their conquerors, we can very well understand their dislike of having anything to do with men who had killed their kinsfolk, burnt their villages, and robbed them of their lands and goods.

Augustine did not think of this, and forgot that the British Christians might not like to give up their own customs and take to those of the Romans, as Augustine insisted that they must do.

The Britons refused ; but when Augustine asked if they would yield on seeing a miracle wrought, they agreed that they would.

Then the Roman monk, it is said, restored the sight of a blind man whom the British clergy had been unable to heal ; but although on seeing this they allowed that he must be a man of God, they would not give up their customs, and asked him to meet them again some time later.

redemption, salvation		convinced, assured, made
magical, secret		certain
standard, ensign, banner,		insisted, determined
flag		bewitch, charm

besought	conquered	villages	miracle
tidings	religion	whether	agreed
welcomed	believe	wrought	although



LESSON 5..

ÆTHELBERT AND AUGUSTINE.

PART II.

They ask counsel of a hermit—His advice and the result—
Augustine's request—He threatens them—Reported massacre
of monks.

MEANWHILE they betook themselves to a hermit who was thought to be very holy, and who may have been more holy than he was wise, and asked him if they should do as Augustine wished.

‘Yes,’ he answered; ‘if he be a man of God, follow him.’

‘But how are we to know whether he be a man of God or not?’

‘Easily,’ said the hermit; ‘the teachers of the truth must be meek and humble, even as Christ was; and if Augustine be lowly, he bears the yoke of the Lord; but if he is stern and haughty, he is not of God, and you need take no heed to his words.’

‘But how can we decide whether he be meek or stern and haughty?’

‘You can do it thus,’ the hermit answered: ‘so manage your coming that he may be there before you. If, when he sees you approaching, he rises from his seat, then he is meek and lowly, and you may obey him; if he remains seated, you may cast his words to the wind.’

Knowing nothing of the hermit’s wise counsel, Augustine, who was seated when the British bishops drew nigh, remained sitting, and so roused their anger that they went against everything that he said.

But Augustine assured them that he wanted them only to give up two or three customs, and to help him in converting the heathen English; and when, following the hermit’s counsel, they again refused this, he warned them that if they despised the unity of the Church, God might bring upon them the hosts of their enemies.

This was scarcely the way to make them less jealous; and the British clergy said that, in order to fulfil this threat, Augustine stirred up the English some years later to murder the monks of the British monastery of Bangor on the Dee. Others said that, before this great disaster happened, Augustine had died.

We do not know how this may have been, but we cannot be far wrong in thinking that

neither was wholly in the right, and that they were quarrelling for very unworthy and childish reasons.

hermit, one who lives alone	disaster, mishap
counsel, advice	haughty, high-minded
assured, convinced	unworthy, not deserving

meanwhile	answered	jealous	wholly
approaching	despised	refused	unity
decide	scarcely	anger	reasons





LESSON 6.

EDWIN AND PAULINUS.

Murder of monks in 607—The reason—Prince Edwin escapes—His danger—The vision—The pledge—Redwald becomes his friend—Edwin marries Æthelbert's daughter—Remains a heathen—Escapes being killed—His vow—Paulinus reminds him of his pledge.

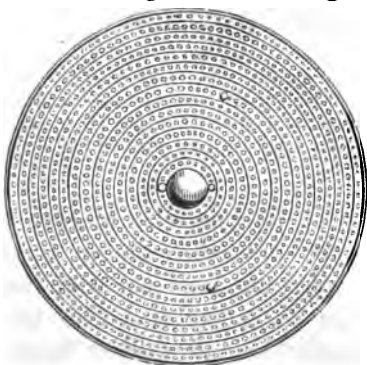
THE British monks of Bangor were murdered (A.D. 607) by the order of Æthelfrith, the king of the country of Deira, the land north of the Humber, from which the story says that the English children whom Gregory saw in Rome had been brought.

This chief was hunting for Edwin, who ought to have been king of the land instead of himself, and who had found a refuge in the house of a Welsh prince. As he was going to join battle with the army of this Welsh prince, he saw the monks holding up their hands in prayer for the safety of the Welsh soldiers, and, crying out that if they prayed against him they fought against him, he ordered them all to be cut down.

But Edwin escaped, and was sheltered in the

house of Redwald, the chief or king of the men of East Anglia, who promised to protect him against his enemy.

For a time things went well ; but at length Redwald was corrupted by the bribes of King Æthelfrith, although Edwin knew nothing of it, until one night, as he was going to bed, a friend



Ancient Saxon Shield.

came to tell him of his danger, and to assure him that he could guide him to a place where no one would be able to harm him.

Edwin was now wearied out with his misfortunes, and he would not

listen to his friend. There was a compact, he said, between himself and Redwald ; and he was tired of going about like a vagabond over the world.

His friend left him, and Edwin sat by his bedside, buried in thought and utterly cast down by his troubles. In the dead of the night he saw approaching him a majestic figure, and he heard a voice which asked him why he sat sorrowfully on a stone while all others were asleep.

‘What matters it to you,’ said Edwin, ‘whether I wake or sleep, or whether I spend the night within doors or abroad?’

‘You have no need to speak thus to me,’ answered the stranger. ‘I know why you grieve and watch and sit alone. But tell me, what would you give to the man who should free you from all this anguish, and keep Redwald from either hurting you himself or allowing others to hurt you?’

‘I will do all for that man which it may be in my power to do,’ said Edwin.

‘But how shall it be if I can assure you that you shall not only escape from your enemies, but conquer them, and rise to greater power than any kings who have yet ruled over the English people?’

Edwin answered that he would be grateful to him from the depth of his heart.

Then said the stranger, ‘If I can do more than this,—if, over and beyond foretelling all your earthly greatness, I can show you a way by which you may rise to a blessedness and peace lasting through ages that shall know no end, will you promise to abide by my counsel, and do as I would have you do?’

Edwin pledged his word; and then the stranger, laying his hand on his head, bade him remember that sign, and keep that faith

which he had plighted to him. But when Edwin lifted up his head to look on him, he found himself alone.

From that hour the tide of fortune turned in his favour. Redwald's wife, learning that he intended to betray his guest, warned him of the shame and disgrace which would blacken his name for ever for such an unmanly deed, and so brought him to a better mind that he avowed himself Edwin's friend, and raised an army to fight on his behalf.

Æthelfrith was slain (A.D. 617) in the great fight at Retford, and Edwin became chief of the Northumbrians in his stead, and married the daughter of Æthelbert, the king of Kent, to whom the good Pope Gregory sent the monk Augustine with his companions, to teach him and his people the Christian faith.

But although one of the monks, named Paulinus, was sent to him, Edwin was not willing to follow Æthelbert's example, and he remained a heathen in spite of all his warnings and counsel.

He had been wonderfully saved from many dangers; and he escaped even more wonderfully from the poisoned dagger of a murderer, whom the king of Wessex had charged to take his life. Pretending to bring a letter from his master, this man was brought before the king in his

house at Aldby ; but when he raised his dagger to strike, a friend of Edwin, standing by, rushed between them, and received the dagger in his own body, and was slain.

Then Edwin, it is said, made a vow that, if he should be suffered to avenge himself on the king of Wessex, he would become a servant of Christ, and live according to His law.

But although he was conqueror in the field, he still shrank from submitting himself to the Christian teachers, until one night, as he was thinking what he ought to do, Paulinus came, and, laying his hand on his head, asked him whether he remembered the sign and the promise.

The king fell at his feet trembling, and declared that he would delay no longer, but would summon all his counsellors and with them devise a way by which all his people might, if possible, be made Christians.

refuge, hiding-place, place of safety	anguish, great sorrow
compact, an agreement	plighted, pledged
vagabond, wanderer	avowed, declared openly
	counsel, advice

corrupted	foretelling	Northumbrians	declared
sorrowfully	blessedness	received	counsellors
approaching	behalf	avenge	devise
murderer	majestic	example	poisoned



LESSON 7.

PAULINUS AND COIFI

Edwin's request—The chief priest's answer—Others assent—Paulinus explains the Christian religion—Edwin becomes a Christian—The priest carries weapons—The temple is destroyed—The people follow the king's example—Edwin becomes powerful—The origin of stories of kings.

HAVING so pledged himself to the Bishop Paulinus, Edwin called his wise men together, and asked them if they would make profession of the new faith which the Roman monks sought to preach to them.

But Edwin's friends were as shrewd and wary as himself, and the chief priest Coifi, who was the first to answer, said, 'It is surely our duty to see what these new tidings are ; for, be they true or false, I know that the religion by which we have been living is worth little or nothing. Who is there amongst all our people who has served the gods more diligently and constantly than I have? but what have the gods done for me? They ought to have raised me to great

glory and wealth ; but others have been suffered to pass me in the race. I say, then, that if the new teachers can give us a good reason for the things which they preach, let us accept their tidings forthwith.'

So, too, said others, and among these one bade the king remember that we know nothing of the things which have been or shall be. 'Our life,' he said, 'compared with the time which went before it, and which shall come after it, seems to me like the flight of a sparrow across the hall in which we are sitting at supper, with a fire blazing on the hearth, while the winter storm is howling without and the night is pitch-black. While the bird is in the room he has light and safety ; but as soon as he has flown into the outer air, he is lost in the darkness, and we see him no more. Of this sort is the life of man. We know not what is to follow it. If these new teachers can tell us, assuredly we ought to follow their counsels.'

Then, at the king's desire, Paulinus explained to them the Christian faith more fully, and the chief priest Coifi, having heard him, said, 'Of a truth he sets before us a clear path, and places us in the road to life and happiness. My judgment, therefore, is that we should show the change which has come over us by setting fire to our temples, and pulling down the

altars from which we have reaped no benefit.'

Then Edwin declared himself a Christian; but when he asked who should destroy the altars, throw down the images of the gods, and profane the temples, Coifi said, 'Who is there who can do this more fitly than I? I have erred through ignorance; but my error has led astray all the people, and it is fit that my act should show them that our service of the gods has been folly. Bring me therefore arms and a horse.'

Now it was not lawful for a priest to carry weapons, and he was allowed to ride only upon a mare; and when the people saw him come forth on the back of a horse and hurry to the temple with lance in hand, they thought that he must have been smitten with madness.

They wondered yet more when, as he drew near the temple, he hurled his weapon straight into it, and gave orders that the building, with its images, should be destroyed by fire.

But when they saw that he took no hurt from his act, they knew that the gods were helpless, and all hastened to be baptized, and to make profession of the faith of Christ.

So the Northumbrian land became Christian, and the new faith was accepted both in the north and in the south. There are many things

in the story of Edwin and Paulinus as to the truth of which we cannot feel very sure, but it is certain that Edwin became as powerful as he had been weak. Men said that while he was king a woman might walk from sea to sea with her new-born babe and receive no harm.

A story not unlike this is told of the great Alfred; but it was in this way that the people loved to show that the rule of a king was firm and just, and that evil-doers were put down, while the weak and helpless were protected against those who might wish to hurt them.

profession , to make an open avowal	profane , to violate
shrewd , sharp-witted, keen	weapons , arms
erred , did wrong	wary , careful
	protected , secured

sought	assuredly	benefit	accepted
diligently	ignorance	evil-doers	astray
hurled	baptized	receive	images





LESSON 8.

INA OF WESSEX.

Why pilgrimages were made—King of Wessex goes to Rome—Dies there—Ina chosen king—Builds monasteries—His wife's wishes, and how she attained them—Ina is disgusted with life—Retires to Rome, and lives like a beggar—The probable true story.

THE wish to visit Jerusalem and Rome was very often and very strongly felt by our forefathers after their conversion to Christianity. Both Jerusalem and Rome were very holy places: Jerusalem, because there Jesus had taught and died; and Rome, because it was thought to be the city of which St. Peter was the first bishop. Men thought it therefore a happy thing if they could be baptized or die at either of them.

In this way Ceadwalla, the king of Wessex (that is, of the West Saxons), resolved, when he ceased to be heathen, to go to Rome and to be baptized by the Pope, as being the first or chief among the bishops of the Christian world. So,

going to the Eternal City (as Rome is often called), he was there baptized, not by his own name, but by the name of Peter, which he took in honour of the apostle.



Rome—St. Peter's, and bridge of St. Angelo.

But before the time came for taking off the white robes which newly baptized persons put on, he was seized with sickness and died (A.D. 688).

His body was laid in the church which he had come to visit, and the words written on his tomb told the people that he was a king who had come all the way from the distant



island of England that he might receive baptism at the hands of the vicar of Christ.

In place of Ceadwalla the people chose Ina to be their king, and under him much was done for the good ordering of the land. By his laws he sought to prevent quarrels among his chief men, and to protect the Britons who had been driven from their lands by the English.

But although Ina was a good general and a brave warrior, he cared more to maintain peace in his kingdom ; and he thought that he could do this best by setting up houses in which monks and nuns could live piously, withdrawn from the world.

For this purpose he built a monastery at Glastonbury, where they say that King Arthur died, and where he sleeps until he shall once more appear as the ruler of the land. On this house he bestowed great wealth, and it grew to be one of the most splendid abbeys in England.

But Ina's wife longed to make him lay down his power, and to live more strictly even than a monk ; and she gained her end, we are told, in this way : A great feast had been held in the palace, and everything showed the riches and glory of the king. But on the next day, when Ina had left the house, the queen bade the servants take out the furniture, and defile the rooms with all manner of filth, and place a litter

of swine in the bed on which they had slept. Then, as they journeyed onwards, the queen suddenly entreated her husband to turn back, warning him that it would be the worse for him if he failed to do so.

So Ina returned, to find nothing but desolation and uncleanness in the halls which had been so lately filled with a goodly company, and had glistened with the polished metal work and embroidered hangings.

Then, turning to him, the queen said, 'Where are the revellings of yesterday? where is gone all the splendour which delighted the eye, and all the rich food which loaded the banquet table? The filth which befouls these halls is the filth of the graves in which our bodies will soon be laid; and the wealth of kings is only a river which will soon be lost in the sea. Let us leave the beauty which fades, and seek only the treasure which is eternal.'

Thus, it is said, she won the victory; and Ina went with her to Rome, where he was shaven as a monk, but where he lived by himself like the poorest beggar of the land. His wife did the like; and so they persevered until they died. But if it be so, he can scarcely have built the English school there, as some say that he did, for this would have made him known, which we are told he most wished to avoid.

Most likely the whole story was put together long after Ina was dead. The oldest writing that we know about him tells us merely that he went to Rome and died there (A.D. 728); and there were many reasons why he should seek a quiet refuge for his last days. He had been king for about forty years, and his strength was worn down by many cares, and he had found it very difficult to make his chief men obey the laws and live in peace. We need not therefore be surprised if he wished to be freed from all the troubles of his work as king.

embroidered, adorned with needlework	journeyed, travelled
revellings, noisy feastings	banquet, a great feast
splendour, grandeur	entreated, begged
	refuge, place of safety

piously	glistened	persevered	wealth
quarrels	befouls	withdrawn	scarcely
desolation	bestowed	merely	surprised





LESSON 9.

EGBERT.

Egbert is crowned—Necessity for defence against the Danes—Their first incursions—They settle in England—How the Danes were different from the English—Settle also in Normandy—Lessons to be learned—Time works great changes—Battle at Hingston.

ABOUT seventy years after the death of Ina, Egbert was chosen and crowned king of the West Saxons (A.D. 800). He was both wise and brave, and made his power respected by all the Welsh, who lived in the country which we still call Wales, and also in Cornwall.

But although these promised to obey him as their lord, and although none who were already in the land dared to molest him, he was obliged to guard himself and his people against the attacks of strangers, who came from some of the same countries which the English themselves had left in the days of Hengist and of Vortigern.

Three centuries, perhaps, had passed away since those days, when the ships of the new-

comers began to be seen on the coasts of England. At first they came and went almost like a flash of lightning. They would land, it might be, early in the morning, steal the cattle, slay the men whom they might meet, set their farms on fire, and be far away at sea again before the sun was high in the heavens.



Gold ring of Egbert's son,
Ethelwulf.

But as time went on, these rovers or pirates, who were called Northmen, saw how good a country England was, and resolved to make it their home. So they began to seize on portions of the land; and thus there were people living in England who would not obey the kings of the English and their laws, and it was the duty of Egbert to make them do so.

These Northmen, who were also known as Danes, were not men of a different race from the English. They might almost understand each other's language, and in many other ways they were like each other.

But the Teutonic tribes already in England had long since become Christian, and had learnt to love a peaceable life better than one of constant war. The new Northmen or Danes were

fierce heathens, cruel and pitiless to women and children as much as to men ; and in the monasteries they found multitudes of men and women, who were quite helpless against the attacks of savage enemies.

But these pirates did not come to England only ; some, as we shall see by and by, went to Normandy, a land on the south side of the English Channel, and settled down in that country. From them sprung the people whom we call Normans, the people whom William the Conqueror brought over to fight against the English under their king Harold, the son of Godwin. But the Normans of William and the Englishmen of Harold could not understand each other's language, because the Normans had learned to speak a kind of Latin, which was the language of the great Roman empire.

This teaches us two things : the one being this, that the Roman empire was much stronger on the continent of Europe than it had ever been in Britain ; and the other being this, that tribes and nations are not always, or even often, friendly to one another because they spring from the same stock. If they live for a long time apart from each other, they come to differ so much in their speech, in their thoughts, in their customs, and in their religion, that their first

feelings for each other are those of deep dislike, if not of hatred.

But if this hatred be ever so fierce, there is always the chance and the likelihood that, as time goes on, they will know and like each other better ; and so it is that the English, the Northmen, the Danes, and the Normans, who have come to this country bringing sword and fire with them, have long since grown into one nation, welded together in thorough harmony.

But to King Egbert those terrible new-comers brought nothing but trouble ; and one of his last acts was to fight a great battle, in which he defeated them at Hingston (Hengestsdun) in Cornwall, where the Britons of Cornwall, rebelling against Egbert, took their part. The Danes were driven to their ships ; but only a few months after he won this victory, the good English king died (A.D. 836).

molest, disturb
peaceable, quiet
pitiless, having no pity
thorough, complete

continent, mainland
harmony, union
welded, joined together so
as to become one

centuries
obliged
lightnings

pirates
resolved
different

language
multitudes
hatred

religion
defeated
terrible



LESSON 10.

KING ALFRED THE GREAT AND THE DANES.

PART I.

Alfred the best English king—His influence over the Danes—Sent to Rome when a boy—What he learnt and saw there—What he did not learn—His stepmother's proffer—Learns to read—Knowledge and goodness should go together—Danes defeated in 871—Alfred driven from the throne—Alfred and the cakes.

FIVE - and - thirty years after the death of Egbert, his grandson Alfred became king of Wessex (A.D. 871). We may speak of him, in truth, as the greatest and best of all the long line of kings who have ruled in England. Many a time it seemed as though he must be crushed altogether in his struggles with the hosts of the Danes ; but he held on firmly, as one who was doing his duty to God, and who was bound to do all that he could to prevent the land from sinking back into heathen savagery.

Danish kings were to sit upon the throne of England ; but it was owing to Alfred alone that, before this came about, the Danes them-

selves had for the most part become Christians, and had got rid of much of their old fierceness and rudeness.

Alfred, we are told, was twice sent to Rome in his childhood ; for the first time when he was only four years old. Two years later his father took him to Rome himself, and as some think left him there to be taught. When he was eight years old, his father died ; and then, if not sooner, Alfred returned to England. He was a quick and active child, eager to note all that passed around him, and no doubt the time which he spent in Rome was of vast benefit to him afterwards.

He there learnt that men must use all the powers of their mind if they wish to make life a thing worth living for. He saw there great buildings, wonderful for their beauty as well as for their size. He saw beautiful pictures and statues, which had come down from days when there were greater sculptors than there are now. He saw books in which were written down the thoughts of wise and good men, and the history of the ages that were past. He saw a number of arts and trades, such as were quite unknown in England, and which he would remember when he was older and more able to see the difference between Winchester and Rome.

But although a great impression was made

upon his mind, he does not seem to have learnt much in the way of what we call school work, if it be true (as his friend Asser, who wrote his life, tells us) that, by the unworthy neglect of his parents and nurses, he remained illiterate till he was twelve years old or more. This means that before that time he was unable to read, and that he was obliged to trust to his memory for all that he knew. That his memory was quick and good, we may be sure, for he easily remembered, we are told, the English poems which he heard recited by the minstrels.

He learned to read at last, it is said, when his stepmother, showing him and his brothers a book with letters rich in gold and colours, said that she would give it to the one who should soonest read it.

‘Do you really mean that you will give it?’ asked the boy; and on learning that she did, he set to work with such zeal that he soon became the owner of it.

But whether this story be true or not, certain it is that by some means or other Alfred had learnt the inestimable value of goodness, wisdom, and knowledge, for their own sakes, quite apart from any earthly benefit which he might obtain from them. For knowledge apart from goodness he cared nothing; but he was convinced that ignorance was a great hindrance in the way of

goodness, and that those who know nothing are not likely to resist temptations to sloth and to all manner of vices.

Alfred's brother, Æthelred, was king when (in 871) news was brought that an army of



Danes had reached Reading, and were laying waste the land. A great battle was fought, and the Danes were beaten; but they returned to the attack again and again, and in one of these fights, a few weeks later, King Æthelred was wounded mortally.

Alfred was chosen king in his brother's place ; but he found only a sea of troubles before him. If he was conqueror in one battle, it was only to be a loser in many more ; and after having been king for seven years, he was so hardly pressed as to be driven to take refuge on an islet in a marsh or morass formed by the meeting of two small rivers.

This islet was afterwards known as Athelney, the island of the Ætheling or prince. Here, we are told, he was sheltered in the hut of a cowherd, whose wife set him to watch some cakes which she was preparing for their daily meal. Alfred, taken up with his thoughts and troubles, forgot to turn them, and they were scorched. He took patiently the scolding of the woman, when, seeing the mischief, she told him that he would be ready enough to eat the food to which he was too lazy to attend ; nor did he let her know that she was speaking to the man who had already done much towards making final victory over the Danes possible.

illiterate, unlearned
inestimable, very great
mortally, to the death
minstrels, musicians

sloth, laziness
sculptors, carvers of wood
or stone
vices, faults

altogether
fierceness
scorched

statues
neglect
recited

hindrance
temptations
wounded

preparing
patiently
possible



LESSON II.

KING ALFRED THE GREAT AND THE DANES.

PART II.

In the Danish camp—Hubba defeated—Guthrum defeated—The terms of peace—What Asser says about Alfred.

ANOTHER story tells us that Alfred entered the camp of the Danes disguised as a harper, and satisfied himself of the ease with which they might be conquered, if suddenly attacked ; and a third relates that St. Cuthbert came to him in a vision, and assured him that his cares and sorrows would soon be ended by victory over his enemies.

Of the defeat of one of them, Hubba, who was ravaging Devonshire, the tidings soon came ; and Hubba's banner, called the Raven, which his sisters wove in a single night, was laid at Alfred's feet. The bird woven on the cloth was supposed to foretell success by the flapping of its wings, as the flag swayed about in the breeze ; and Alfred was glad to find that the possession



Alfred in the Danish camp.

of this banner cheered the spirits and raised the courage of his people.

He left his retreat at Athelney, and men came crowding to his standard, full of joy, when they learnt that Alfred was not dead, as they had feared that he was. He now fought another great battle with the other Danish chief Guthrum, and this time the Dane was so utterly defeated that he prayed for peace on any terms which the king might choose to give.

Alfred's terms were wonderfully mild. He saw, perhaps, that the hope of driving the Danes altogether out of England must be disappointed, and that it was better to try and make them peaceable settlers and citizens, as many Danes in the parts to the north of the Thames, he knew, already were. So he said that if Guthrum and his chief men would become Christians, and would depart out of his kingdom altogether, he would give him East Anglia, that is, the countries of the North Folk and the South Folk (Norfolk and Suffolk), for a kingdom. Guthrum accepted the terms, and kept faith with Alfred to the day of his death.

Alfred's friend Asser says some strange things about the causes which led to all his troubles, tracing these not merely to mistakes into which Alfred might easily fall, but to vices which would show a bad heart, and at the best

a very gross selfishness. But although Asser no doubt wished to tell the truth, we must not forget that of all Alfred's good qualities his love of truth and honesty is perhaps the brightest. Now, in one of his books he says, 'All my life through I have striven to live worthily.' Alfred could scarcely have spoken of himself in this way if he had fallen into the wretchedly bad ways which Asser ascribes to him. His friend probably was one of those men who manage constantly to magnify a slight fault until it appears a crime.

disguised, dressed so as	kept faith, did as he had
not to be known	promised
retreat, hiding-place	citizens, inhabitants
ravaging, laying waste	gross, great

satisfied	success	selfishness	probably
conquered	possession	worthily	constantly
enemies	disappointed	wretchedly	merely





LESSON 12.

EDWY AND DUNSTAN.

Edwy chosen king—Quarrels in his reign—Edwy and Dunstan take different sides—Charges made against Edwy's wife—Edwy chooses his wife's company—Anger of the nobles—Battle in the north, and death of Edwy's wife—Dunstan's ability—His wishes—Accident at a council—What Dunstan's friends thought about it.

ABOUT half a century after the death of Alfred, the men of Wessex chose Edwy (Eadwig) to be their king (A.D. 955), and some strange and sad stories are told us about his reign.

We do not know very much about him; and some of those who have told us of things which happened in his time were strongly tempted to bring them before us, not in the way in which they really happened, but as they would have wished them to happen. For there was one great question which some thought ought to be settled at once; and this was, whether clergymen should be allowed to marry or not.

The king Edwy was on one side in this

matter, and Dunstan, abbot of King Ina's monastery at Glastonbury, and afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, was on the other. In his days the clergy were generally married; and when we read of monasteries we are often reading of houses in which a number of people, many of whom were married, agreed to live by certain rules, and to attend frequent services in the church. All this seemed to Dunstan not merely wrong, but highly sinful; and he resolved to bring about quite a new state of things.

Dunstan was still abbot of Glastonbury when the young king Edwy was crowned. Edwy was married to a very beautiful lady named Elgiva (*Ælfgifu*); but those who admire Dunstan pretend that he was not really married to her, and bring shameful charges against her and her mother, *Æthelgifu*.

After the coronation there was a great banquet, at which the king sat surrounded by all his great men. After a little while Edwy rose from his chair, and went to another room, in which were his wife and her mother. No doubt he was glad to be with them; and it may be that he had no liking for the hard drinking in which the English were always much tempted to indulge.

But the nobles were very angry at the king's leaving them, and insisted that he must come

back; and at last it was agreed that Dunstan should go to the king and make known their will, telling him that Æthelgifu must be driven away from the court, on pain of being put to death if she should dare to come back. So Dunstan went, and putting the crown on his head, compelled him to return to the hall. But Æthelgifu did not leave the court, and she said that Dunstan should suffer for what he had done.

For the present she was safe, but for the present only. The people of the country to the north of the Thames said that they would no more have Edwy for their king, and Edwy went with an army into their land. But he had not men enough, and he hurried back into Wessex with Æthelgifu. The poor lady was caught by the enemies who were chasing them, and they cut the sinews of her legs, and left her to die in misery.

Dunstan was now able to carry out his work more boldly. He was a man of a very strong will, and he had all the learning of the time. We are told that he was a skilful craftsman in metal-work, in iron, and in ivory, and that he was able to write books, with the beautifully-coloured capital letters, which were made to serve instead of pictures; and all this handicraft he carried on in a cell which was not very much larger than his body.



English costume before the Conquest.

The truth is that Dunstan had always of his own choice lived as a hermit, and he wished every one else to follow his example, and he was fiercely angry when the great body of the clergy refused to do so.

At last a great council was summoned to meet at a place called Calne; and here the floor suddenly gave way in that part of the room where the men who were opposed to Dunstan were standing. Many were killed, many more were hurt. The part where Dunstan stood remained firm, or, as some said, he escaped by laying hold of a beam.

In this accident, if accident it was, Dunstan and his friends said that they saw the hand of God, which was raised against those who would allow the clergy to lead sinful lives. But it has been well said that when we read such a story as this, it is difficult not to remember that in all matters of building Dunstan had more knowledge and skill than any one else in his day.

archbishop, chief bishop
coronation, crowning
indulge, give way to
craftsman, a workman

accident, a mishap
sinews, the ligaments by
 which the joints are
 moved

tempted
clergymen
monastery

agreed
chasing
compelled

fiercely
beautifully
coloured

handicraft
summoned
council



LESSON 13.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR AND THE HOUSE OF GODWIN.

PART I.

Danish king Cnut—Rebukes his courtiers—Edward chosen king—
The Normans and their manners—Effect on Edward—Chooses
Norman friends and priests.

WITHIN a century and a half from the death of Alfred the Great, two lines of kings, who were not Englishmen, were to sit on the throne of England. The first was the line of Danish kings, which began with Cnut (A.D. 1017), a king to whom England owed much for the justice and the wisdom of his rule.

Of him is told the story which relates his rebuke to the courtiers who professed to believe that the king could do anything, even to controlling the tides of the sea. Cnut, it is said, had his chair put on the beach, and there sat till the waves began to wash around it. Then, rising up and noting the folly of his courtiers' talk, he bade them for the future to keep within the bounds of truth.

The sceptre of Cnut passed to his two sons, one of whom was worthless, and the other weak ; and when these two were dead, the great council of the nation, called the Witenagemot (or the meeting of the wise men), chose Edward, son of Æthelred, of whom we commonly speak as Edward the Confessor.

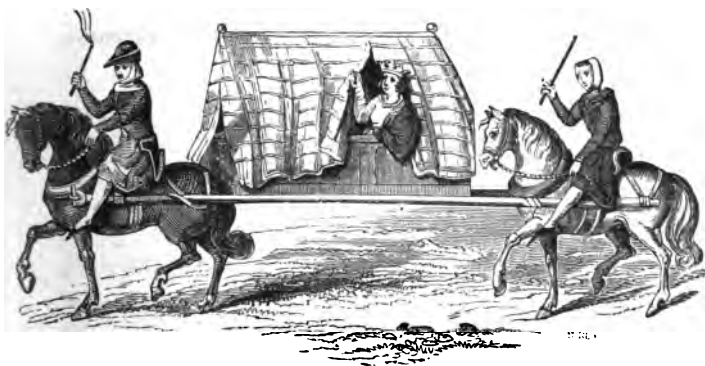
Edward had spent most of his life abroad, much of it at the court of the dukes of those Northmen who had vainly tried to settle in England, and had then crossed the Channel, and sailing up the Seine, made themselves a home in the city of Rouen.

These Northmen of Normandy had long since ceased to be fierce heathens. They had learnt to speak the language of the Roman empire, from which has been formed the language which we call French. The splendour of their chiefs, the grandeur of their churches, and perhaps the general comfort of the people were far beyond anything which could then be seen in this country.

In some ways, too, life was more decent and seemly in Normandy than in England. There was less of boorishness and of hard drinking and gross feeding ; the manners of the Normans were more courteous, and their language sounded softer and more musical.

All this would be sure to impress deeply

a mind like that of Edward, who disliked noise and tumult, and vastly preferred the beauty of a magnificent church to the turmoil of a camp, though the men in it might have the costliest armour, and their horses the most splendid trappings in the world. Edward was, in short, much more of a monk than a king, and he came back



Early English conveyance.

to his own country very much disposed to quarrel with and to dislike everything in it.

We should probably be quite right in saying that he never felt at home here. If he could not be in the palace of the Norman duke, he could at least have Norman nobles and Norman minstrels in his own ; and he could make Norman priests bishops of English sees, as these became vacant by the deaths of those who filled them.

It was easy to see that what Edward wished most of all was to induce the English to adopt the manners and the speech of the Normans, and to make them give up everything which distinguished them as Englishmen.

courtiers, attendants on a king		vacant, empty	
courteous, agreeable		distinguished,	marked
preferred, chose first, liked		clearly	
best		boorishness	rudeness,
		vulgarity	
professed	language	tumult	armour
believe	grandeur	magnificent	probably
heathens	decent	costliest	language





LESSON 14.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR AND THE HOUSE OF GODWIN.

PART II.

Edward offends English, and causes quarrels—Invites William of Normandy—His promise to William—Misfortune for England—William's hopes—Harold sent to Normandy—Wrecked and imprisoned.

EDWARD thus gave no little offence to such men as Godwin, the great Earl of Wessex, whose daughter Edith (Eadgyth) he married. Dislike easily led to quarrelling, and at length the great earl was banished with his family, and the queen was sent to a nunnery.

Edward then thought that he had gained all that he wanted. The Norman priest Robert was archbishop of Canterbury; and Edward could now invite the Norman Duke William (who was to come to England a second time as the Conqueror) to be his guest.

William came with a great train of knights and nobles, and it is said that Edward promised

him to do all that he could to secure for him the English crown after his own death.

He could not leave him the crown, as some have thought, for no English king could do this, and Edward himself was not the heir to the crown (if we look merely to descent from father to son) when he was chosen king. But he could recommend William to his Witan or wise men; and the advice of the king would be likely to carry great weight with them.

It is, of course, quite possible that a weak and foolish man like Edward might make promises which he had no right to make; and it was the great misfortune of England that such men as the sons of Cnut and the Confessor should come between the great Danish king and Harold, the son of Godwin, who fell in the fight at Hastings.

But there is no doubt that the Norman Duke William went back to Rouen full of dreams, in which he saw himself the lord not of Normandy only, but of England; and after Earl Godwin and his family came back from their exile, and the Archbishop Robert and the other Norman nobles were driven from the kingdom, fortune threw in William's way a chance which he was not likely to let slip.

Edward wished to send a messenger to the Norman duke. and Harold undertook to go;

although his friends strongly warned him against doing so. 'William knows,' they said, 'that you are the first man in this kingdom, and he will surely try to make use of you for the carrying out of his plans.'

But Harold would not be persuaded. A storm carried his ship away, and threw it on the beach, and before many hours were passed Harold found himself a prisoner in the dungeon of the Count of Ponthieu (1065).

By the savage custom of the time all vessels which were wrecked were supposed to belong to the lord of the country, and the men in them became prisoners, who had to pay a heavy price if they wished to be free again. The count insisted that Harold must pay a huge ransom ; but Harold managed to send a messenger who told the Norman duke of the disaster which had befallen the great English earl.

banished , driven from the country	train , number of followers
descent , passing from father to son	disaster , accident
	befallen , happened
	exile , banishment

archbishop	recommend	nunnery	doubt
conqueror	persuaded	merely	prisoners
guest	dungeon	misfortune	warned



LESSON 15.

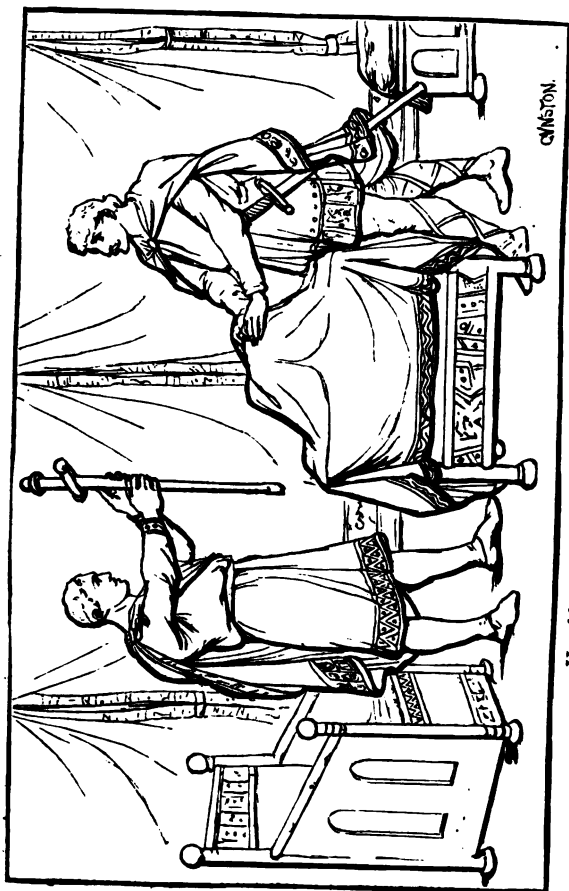
THE OATH OF EARL HAROLD.

PART I.

William's joy at Harold's misfortune—Tries to bind Harold—Harold gives a sort of promise—William wishes him to take an oath—Harold takes it.

THE tidings of Harold's captivity delighted the heart of the Norman Duke William, and he sent at once to warn the Count of Ponthieu that he should soon feel the weight of his hand if he failed to set the English earl free. William was still more rejoiced to have Harold as his guest.

He was the most powerful man in England, and if he could but get him on his own side, what hindrance could there be to his becoming king of England when the silly and foolish Confessor should die? There could be none, except in the choice of the English people, and of this the Norman duke did not think it worth while to take account. He thought that everything would be safe if he could only bind Harold to himself.



Harold taking the oath to William of Normandy.

This he tried to do in two ways. First, he offered him one of his daughters as his wife, and he professed to believe that Harold promised to marry her. But William feared that this pledge might not be strong enough. So he talked with Harold about promises which he said that the Confessor had given to him, and he begged Harold to say that he would back a claim which must be rightful, because it was sanctioned by the man who was now king of England.

Harold knew nothing of any such promises, but he could not deny that in his folly Edward might have made them ; and if he should refuse in plain words to do what William asked, he knew that William was a man who would not shrink from throwing him into a dungeon, from which there would be no king, or chief, or overlord strong enough to rescue him. He was in William's clutches, and he spoke in a fashion which William chose to regard as a pledge.

He said that Harold had bound himself by his word as a truthful man ; and that if this was the case, he could not object to take a solemn oath which would bind him to nothing more than that to which he had bound himself already. It was only the solemnity of the thing, and that was all ; but William knew what an effect the solemn taking of an oath might have even on a

strong mind like that of Harold, and probably he felt that he himself, if thus solemnly pledged, would hold to promises which otherwise he would, without the least scruple, tear to shreds.

So the Norman duke led Harold to a table on which a cloth was laid over a casket, which, as the English earl knew, contained some relics, although he did not know what these relics were; and then he made him lay his hands on the casket and swear that he would be William's man, that he received William as heir to the throne of England, and that he would do his best to secure to him the English crown when next the wise men of England met to choose a king.

When the oath-taking was done, William removed the cloth, and, opening the casket, quietly showed his guest that he had sworn over the bones of the holiest of the saints, whose wrath would lie heavy on him for ever if he should dare to break the pledge thus given.

sanctioned, allowed
pledge, binding promise
oath, solemn vow

solemnity, seriousness
scruple, hesitation
relics, remains

captivity
rejoiced
fashion

solemn
holiest
casket

guest
probably
rescue

hindrance
becoming
Confessor



LESSON 16.

THE OATH OF EARL HAROLD.

PART II.

The oath not binding, and why—Wrong done to Harold—Also to England.

IT is no business of ours to defend Earl Harold, or to condemn him. He had many faults; but the greatness of his merits far surpassed that of his faults. In this instance he may have been weak, and we might have looked upon him as more of a hero if he had refused to obey William's command, and if he had vanished from the world to die in the dungeons of a Norman castle.

But this is not the way in which we should regard the matter. No man is bound by any promise which he may make to a thief or a robber who holds a blunderbuss to his ear; and it was just this which William was now doing to Harold. He was exacting a promise under threats, and as soon as Harold was out of his hand he was no more bound to keep faith with

William than he was bound to keep faith with a burglar.

To Harold, then, William had done a grievous wrong. He had done what he could to tarnish and debase a high and noble spirit; he had tried to crush him by bringing him into the slavery of superstition, which is the worst of all slavery.

But this was not all. He was trying to thrust himself as king on a people who had the right of making their own free choice; and if the pledge which Harold gave had been ever so binding on himself (and it was no more binding than a thread of gossamer), it was not, and it never could be, binding on the English people.

No foreign chief or king has the right to bind any nation, although unluckily he may sometimes have the power to do so. Harold himself, although he was the first Englishman of his time, and had done more perhaps than any one else to win the love of the people, had no right to do so.

Harold had no title to be heard if he should urge such a plan upon the nation; and it is quite certain that they would have refused to listen to him if he had pleaded William's cause before William had beaten the English army in battle.

It is very needful for us to keep our minds perfectly clear on this point, which is a plain

question of right and wrong. Harold may have been weak, but in forcing a pledge from him, William did to him a gross wrong, and committed in his own person a shameful sin. To the English people he did a wrong still more gross ; and if his claim had been gravely urged by Harold, the nation would have been bound to treat William as their most deadly enemy.

surpassed, went beyond	superstition,	religious
blunderbuss, a firearm	scruples or fear	
which discharges several	gossamer, spider's web	
bullets	tarnish, spoil	
burglar, a house-breaker	exacting, forcing from	

condemn	unluckily	perfectly	question
obey	urge	although	slavery
vanished	forcing	pleaded	grievous





LESSON 17.

THE CONSECRATION OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Edward the Confessor's wishes—Builds Westminster Abbey—King is ill on day of consecration—His delirium—A vision—Suitable to such a king—Harold to be his successor—Death of Edward—Harold freely chosen king—William's claims not thought of—Edgar passed by—Harold worthy of choice.

LIKE Ina of Wessex, Edward the Confessor had set his heart on founding a great monastery. Like Ina, too, he had wished to visit Rome ; but when the Witan, or wise men, would not let him go, the Pope told him that he might with equal profit do some good work at home.

Edward therefore gave himself with greater devotion to the task which he had taken in hand ; and as the Christmas of the year 1065 drew nigh, the abbey church of St. Peter at Westminster was ready for its consecration.

The feast of the Holy Innocents, the 28th of December, was the day fixed for the hallowing ; but on that day the king was too ill to leave his room. He had been seized by fever on Christ-

mas eve, and it was clear that he had not many days to live. But although he could not witness it himself, he would not allow the consecration to be put off. Edith, the queen, who had returned to her husband from the nunnery when her father and her brothers came back from their exile, appeared in his stead.

The life of the Confessor had been marked by a multitude of visions and dreams, and it was so to the last. His senses wandered under the violence of the fever; but when he broke out into dismal prophecies of evils which were about to come upon the land, he may have been thinking in part of the mischiefs which might be caused by his unlawful promises to the Norman Duke William.

He spoke as though he saw the plagues in store for the land. 'The Lord has stretched His bow,' he cried almost with a shriek, 'He has drawn out His sword; He brandishes it as a warrior, and His wrath will show itself in fire and flame.'

Waking up from what he called a trance, he said that he had seen two monks who had died years ago in Normandy, but who had now come to tell him that within a year and a day after his death, fiends should stalk through his whole land, and should harry it from one end to another with fire and sword.

It was a vision not altogether unsuitable perhaps for a man who had done his best to bring about the invasion of England by encouraging the monstrous ambition of the Norman duke, and who more than any other man was directly chargeable with the miseries which were coming on his countrymen.

But although he may have uttered some words from which those who favoured the Norman duke gathered that he wished William to be his successor, there is no doubt that he addressed Harold as the man best fitted to take his place, and as the one who was sure to receive it. His opinion was perhaps worth not much more than the rambling talk which provoked a smile from the archbishop of Canterbury.

Not a few of the bystanders were shocked that the words of the saintly king should be treated by the primate as the dotings of a diseased brain ; but such mischief as he could do to his subjects by meddling in matters which it was not for him to settle, had been done long ago.

The new year was but five days old when Edward died, and on the feast of the Epiphany his body was laid in the shrine which may still be seen in the abbey church of Westminster.

On the same day the crown of England was laid on the head of Harold the son of Earl Godwin. The free choice of the Witan had made him

king. Not a word had been said of the Norman duke, with whom the English people had nothing to do ; or if any such words had been uttered, no heed had been paid to them. Nor did the council waste time in discussing the claims of the young prince Edgar. He alone, it is true, represented the line of Alfred and of Egbert ; but he had neither experience nor the qualities which would fit him to face the difficulties which might come crowding thickly upon him.

Harold had been tried in the council chamber, not less than in many a hard-fought field ; and in both he had shown himself fully worthy of the trust which the people placed in his bravery, his firmness, and his wisdom.

consecration , setting apart for sacred uses	ambition , desire of power shrine, tomb
brandishes , waves about	Epiphany , feast celebrated
harry , to rob, plunder, or oppress	twelve days after Christ- mas

prophecies	monstrous	diseased	discussing
shriek	chargeable	experience	mischief
warrior	successor	plagues	addressed



LESSON 18.

TOSTIG'S REBELLION.

Tostig rebels—Goes to Normandy—Ravages the English coast—
Seeks aid in Scotland, Denmark, and Norway—Tempts
Hardrada—His wealth—He sends a fleet—Reaches the Tyne—
Routs northern earls at Fulford—York surrenders.

TROUBLES came thick and fast in Harold's short reign of nine months. His brother Tostig, who had been deprived of his Northumbrian earldom for tyranny and cruelty which his people could no longer bear, was wandering about to find some king or prince who would help him to win it back by force of arms. So long as he recovered it, he cared not at all whether he brought upon the whole country the miseries of invasion and conquest.

Hurrying into Normandy when he learnt that William's messengers had gone to Harold to summon him to yield up the crown, Tostig expressed his wonder that the duke could allow Harold's perjury to go unpunished, and promised to aid him in every way, if he would only resolve on vengeance. But William was not yet ready.

He did not yet know whether his people would support him in an attack on the English king.

Tostig, however, would not wait. He had William's full approval of all that he might do ; and he set out with such ships as he could get together for the English coast. Although Harold's fleet was on the watch, the traitor contrived to escape it, and, sailing to the Isle of Wight, obtained money and food from the people. Thence he sailed eastwards, wantonly ravaging every place to which he came, until his brother, having heard the tidings in London, set out on his march for Sandwich. Before he could reach that port, Tostig was gone to find a refuge in the court of the Scottish King Malcolm.

But Tostig sought for more than a mere refuge. His heart was set on avenging himself upon his brother, and he hurried from Scotland, first to Denmark, where King Swend refused to aid him, and then to Norway, where for a while he seemed likely to fare no better with King Harold Hardrada.

The Norwegian prince had no mind to run a deadly risk in order to restore an English earl to an earldom from which he had been driven by his own people. The danger would be all his own, the profit would all go to Tostig.

But Tostig thought that the Norwegian chief could be bent to his will if he could bring him to

see things in another light. He had shrewdly urged the Norman duke to treat the English crown as his rightful inheritance; he now reminded Hardrada that Danish princes had reigned in England, and that he had only to assert his right to the sceptre of Cnut, if he wished to leave to his children a richer inheritance than the stony fells of Norway.

Little disposed at first to heed his counsels, the Norwegian king at length declared his willingness to undertake the venture. His banner, called the Landwaster, was unfurled, and a fleet, some said of even a thousand ships, left Bergen for the shores of England.

In his earlier years, Harold Hardrada had served long among the Varangians at Constantinople; and he had returned to Norway with great wealth, and with all the dispositions which make a man a hard and pitiless tyrant. Among his costliest treasures was a mighty mass of gold, which we are told that twelve youths could scarcely carry. This gold mountain Harold took with him to England; for his purpose, like that of Hengist and Horsa, was to make for himself a fixed home there. Before the year was ended, this treasure had passed into the hands of the Norman Duke William.

It was already September when the Norwegian fleet reached the Tyne, and thence sailed south-

ward, ravaging the whole coast as it went along. In some parts not a hand was raised against them ; at Scarborough they were stoutly resisted, and the town was burnt and the people massacred by his orders.

Thus far things had gone well with the Norwegian king, and the gloomy fears with which he had set out on the expedition were perhaps scattered altogether to the winds when he met the forces of the two great northern earls, and defeated them utterly at Fulford.

Four days after this great fight, the city of York opened its gates to Harold Hardrada, who demanded hostages from the people of the city, and gave them hostages himself. Had the people of York waited but one day longer, the arrival of the English Harold would have made it unnecessary for them to surrender at all.

deprived, robbed
tyranny, cruelty
perjury, false swearing
hostages, pledges

dispositions, mental qualities
wantonly, in sport
demanded, asked

Northumbrian earldom
ravaging inheritance
vengeance avenging
approval reigned

sceptre
expedition
surrender
massacred
unnecessary
counsels
scarcely
messengers



LESSON 19.

THE FIGHT AT STAMFORD BRIDGE.

King Harold reaches Stamford Bridge—Message to Tostig—The reply—Hardrada's opinion of King Harold—Hardrada is slain—Northmen utterly routed—Harold offered peace to the survivors.

BY a march of prodigious speed, the English king, hurrying up to York, found that the Norwegian army was encamped on the banks of the Derwent at Stamford Bridge, near the old house at Aldby, where King Edwin had been struck down by the murderer's dagger.

Of the great battle which was fought here, we know not very much. The Norwegian account of it is a poem rather than a history; and the poet has told the tale not so much in the way in which things happened, as in the way which would best keep up the glory of the king of Norway, who fell in the great fight.

The two sovereigns, each named Harold, met here for the first and the last time. From the English host twenty men rode forward, bearing a message to Earl Tostig. If he would return to

his old faith, his brother would forgive him all his wrong-doing. He should have again his earldom of Northumberland. He should have, if he wished it, even a third part of the kingdom, with Harold for his over-lord.

‘And what,’ asked Tostig, ‘shall be given to King Harold of Norway?’

‘Seven feet of ground,’ was the answer, ‘or as much more as he is taller than other men.’

‘Go back,’ was Tostig’s reply, ‘and make ready for battle. It shall never be said that Tostig brought his friend to England to betray and desert him in the hour of danger.’

As the horsemen rode back to the English camp, the Norwegian prince asked Tostig who the man was who had spoken so well. On hearing that it was the English king, Hardrada asked wrathfully why he had not been told of this. ‘Never, had I known it, should he have gone back to see any of my men slain in the fight.’

Then Tostig told him that he had held his peace, because it was impossible for him to be the murderer of a brother who had come to offer him more than the possessions which he had lost.

Without noticing this sentiment, Harold, we are told, said simply, ‘The king of the English



The fight at Stamford Bridge.

was a small man, but he stood well in his stirrups.'

But in truth we cannot depend on the story of this conversation, and still less on the story of the fight which followed it. The two armies had fought for some time, when the Berserker rage seized the Norwegian king, who with his huge two-handed sword clove for himself a way through many ranks of the English, till an arrow pierced his throat, and he sank lifeless to the earth.

Tostig now stood near to the Landwaster; and to him, and to those who were gathered with him round the standard, Harold again offered peace. Rather would they be slain, the Northmen shouted, than receive their lives from the English. The struggle was again renewed, until all the Northmen were carried away by the same spirit of frantic fury which had led to the death of their king. They threw away their coats of mail, and, rushing on the enemy, were slain, or fought on until they died, without a wound, from sheer weariness. So the fight went on till the setting of the sun; and during the dark hours of the night the remnant of the invading host retreated from the battle-ground.

So runs the tale. And although it is clearly, in many points, an imaginary picture, it tells of

a terrible struggle, and of a decisive victory for the English. After the fight, Harold sent messages to those who were guarding the Norwegian fleet, offering peace. These, we are told, gave hostages, and swore that they would for ever keep friendship with this land, and from that day to this they have kept their word. Four-and-twenty ships sufficed to carry over the remnant of the Norwegian hosts from the Northumbrian shores.

prodigious, very great	sentiment, expression of
encamped, having tents	opinion
pitched	frantic, mad
sovereigns, kings	sufficed, were enough
decisive, conclusive	sheer, utter, complete

hurrying	noticing	conversation	retreated
desert	possessions	renewed	weariness
wrathfully	stirrups	remnant	guarding





LESSON 20.

THE LANDING OF THE CONQUEROR AT PEVENSEY.

PART I.

William lands in Sussex—Watch previously kept—Now removed—
English king had no standing army—Militia disbanded, and
fleet absent—Wind against the Normans—How William kept
up their courage—Prayers for success.

KING Harold was seated with his nobles, we are told, at the banquet-table in York, when a messenger came to say that, only three days before, the duke of the Normans had landed his army on the coast of Sussex.

The course of events in this wonderful year is indeed astonishing. From the day on which he had been chosen king, the mind of Harold had been intently fixed on the guarding of his realm against the Norman forces; and almost up to the time at which these forces came, the watch had been properly kept up.

Had the Normans come in the months of May,

June, July, or August, they would have been met by a body of men who would either have made it impossible for them to land, or would in a few days have starved them into surrender. The Norman duke could not afford to wait for success. His ships brought plenty of wine, it is said, but of food very little. For this he depended on the land which he invaded ; and if his army had been surrounded or kept within narrow quarters by a larger force, the doom of his enterprise would have been sealed.

But the English kings had then no standing army except a small body of guards, who were known as his Housecarls, and who were far too few in number to watch and defend a long line of coast. For this work he was obliged to trust to the militia of the shires ; and this was a force which could not easily be kept together long.

We cannot doubt that the men who were so called out knew well that the safety and freedom of all England depended on their remaining at their posts ; but if they did so, who was to reap their harvests and garner in their corn ?

There was the risk of surprise on the one side and the risk of starvation on the other ; and as the months passed by, and the grain ripened,

and the Norman did not come, the risk of ruin for their farms and families seemed greater than any which they could run from the attacks of foreign enemies, who perhaps might never come at all.

Even Harold, with all his firmness, and with all the hold which he had on the affection and trust of his subjects, could not stand out against the



William's ship. (From the Bayeux Tapestry.)

pressure thus put upon him. With a heavy heart he found himself compelled to let his people go home, and the fleet followed him up the river, while he rode back to London.

But although the whole line of coast was thus left defenceless, the heavens seemed for a time to fight for the English. The autumn was some way advanced before the Norman ships were

ready ; but when all the troops of Duke William were brought together, the wind blew steadily from the north, and day after day they remained idly and impatiently on the shore at Saint Valery, in the territory of that Count of Ponthieu who had seized Harold after his shipwreck, and thrown him into his dungeons.

William's task was hard enough. Some of his vessels were lost, some of his men ran away, and some perhaps were killed in stray fights with English ships. He had to keep up the spirits of his soldiers, who, as the days passed by, liked less and less the thought of the hardships and of the possible defeats in store for them ; and he did so partly by the speeches which he constantly addressed to them, but more by religious services.

Day after day he went to offer up his prayers in the minster church, and at last the abbot and the monks of St. Valery brought out in solemn pomp the shrine which contained the relics of their patron saint, and laid it on a carpet spread upon the ground, for the alms and the prayers of the soldiers. The shrine was covered with the showers of money rained down upon it ; and the whole army, headed by the duke, knelt down to pray for the change of wind which would speed them on their way to England. That very night the wind

veered round to the south. It was the second day after Harold's victory at Stamford Bridge.

intently, fully	defenceless, without pro-
enterprise, undertaking	tection
militia, soldiers employed	territory, country
usually in their own work	depended, hung

banquet-table	garner	impatiently	solemn
realm	families	shipwreck	patron
housecarls	pressure	religious	speeches





LESSON 21.

THE LANDING OF THE CONQUEROR AT PEVENSEY.

PART II.

Normans embark—Set sail—William's wit turns an evil into a good omen—Land without opposition—Harold's hopes—All disappointed.

THE order was given for all to go on board their ships, and it was obeyed with fiery eagerness. In the haste to embark, many left their stores behind them; while the tramp of the armed bands, the clashing of weapons and armour, the stamp of horses, and the braying of trumpets caused a tumult of sounds as fearful as the din of battle.

The evening had closed in, when, having offered up his prayers once more in the church of St. Valery, William went on board his ship, the *Mora*, and set sail, with the lamp blazing at the mast-head for the guidance of the rest. But so swift was the *Mora*, that, when the day broke, not a single ship was in sight. After a time four became

visible, and within an hour the sea seemed covered with a forest of hulls and masts. By nine o'clock on the morning of Thursday the 28th of September, the Norman ships were at anchor off Pevensey, about half-way between Beechy Head and Hastings.

William himself was the first armed man to set foot on English ground. As he landed he stumbled ; and but for his readiness his men might have been discouraged at the outset by an incident of evil omen. ' By the splendour of God,' he cried aloud, ' the earth of England is in my hands. I have taken *seizin* of my kingdom.'

His men hailed with loud cheers the feudal phrase, which denoted the entry of a lord into possession of his fief or estate. To make the form more complete, a soldier, it is said, ran to a cottage, and returning with some straw from its thatched roof, placed it in the duke's hands, saying that he had *seizin* now, not only of England, but of all that was within it.

There was no one to oppose the landing. The Housecarls were with the king at York; the levies of militia which had been on the watch only three weeks before, had gone to their homes for the ingathering of the harvest ; and if any remained, these would be rather for the purpose of giving an alarm, than for any serious attempts to prevent the landing of an enemy.



Landing of William the Conqueror.

Harold had hoped, when the summons came which hurried him to the north, that, as the coming of the Normans had been so long delayed, new hindrances might put off William's preparations, until the approach of winter should make it necessary to postpone the expedition to another year.

He hoped, too, that success in his northern campaign might set him free to return to the southern coast before William could cross the Channel ; and, lastly, he hoped that the weather, which had befriended him thus far, might befriend him a little longer.

All these hopes were disappointed ; and William landed just at the moment when the least resistance could be made to him. The Norman host was sheltered within its entrenched camp before Harold could start from York, and again the issue must be decided by battle. The issue was decided against him, and it seemed that England had passed under the yoke of strangers.

But it must never be forgotten that the Normans belonged to the same stock with the English, the Saxons, and the Jutes ; that they had but taken to speaking a new language in their new homes on the Seine ; and that they were now returning to the land where they would learn again to use the old speech of their forefathers,

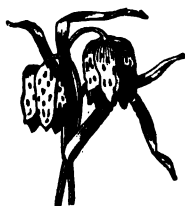
and be welded with those whom they conquered into one nation, strong in its law and its freedom, and in its sense of duty.

eagerness, readiness
guidance, direction
incident, something hap-
pening

seizin, possession
levies, companies, forces
campaign, period of war
phrase, saying

fiery thatched
visible serious
discouraged delayed

preparations entrenched
approach decided
resistance forefathers





LESSON 22.

THE MARCH TO SENLAC.

PART I.

Want of money the cause of disasters—Disunion among English—
Regrets when too late—William claims the throne—Harold's
reply—Offers prayers at Waltham—And relics.

'I COULD not be everywhere at the same moment,' said King Harold when he heard that the Norman duke had fortified his camp at Pevensey and was ravaging and harrying far and wide.

It is easy to be wise after an event, and no reply can be made to the pleading of Harold, except on the ground that at all costs the army on the south coast should have been kept together.

All that was needed was money. It was by money that Duke William had kept his troops together during the summer months, first on the banks of the Dive, and afterwards at St. Valery; and if the defeating of the Norman duke was a matter of life or death, then the money needed for keeping the English labourers

in the field should, by some means or other, have been provided. The fact that it was not furnished by the great men shows how slender as yet were the bonds which held together the English nation.

The story of the Norman conquest is a sad tale of disunion, jealousy, selfishness, and even treachery, marring the efforts and chilling the zeal of those who were eager to devote themselves to the service of the country.

King Harold fell at Hastings only because the great northern earls, Edwin and Morcar, failed to do their duty, and made it needful for him to march to York and Stamford Bridge, when he should have been watching the coasts of Kent and Sussex.

Indeed, we can scarcely say that as yet there was an English nation in existence. Far from coming forward with all their men to drive out the common enemy, the great hope of Edwin and Morcar was that the kingdom might be divided.

For this purpose they held aloof from the struggle with Harold of Norway; for this purpose they remained at home when Harold of England marched southward to the fatal field of Hastings. They did not know what manner of man the Norman duke was, and their eyes were opened only when they found that William.

did not mean to content himself with the lands to the south of the Thames.

Meanwhile William was doing all that he could to bring his quarrel with Harold to the issue of battle. His army ravaged and destroyed everything that was within reach of their camp; and when, ten days after the fight at Stamford Bridge, the English king was again at Westminster, he sent him a messenger, bidding him come down from the throne which belonged to the Norman by virtue first of the promise of the Confessor, and then of the oath of Harold.

Harold's wrath was greatly roused; but he compelled himself to answer quietly that the oath was drawn from him by force, and was therefore of no value; and that if Edward had made any promise, that promise was set aside by the words uttered by him on his death-bed. He might have added that he was king, not by virtue of those words, but by the free choice of the English people.

Before he began his southward march, Harold determined to offer up his prayers once more in the church of the great abbey of Waltham, which he had founded. Harold's faith was stronger probably and more healthy than that of his great adversary.

But we could scarcely expect to find him free from the ways of thinking and feeling

which were common to the age; and one of the commonest habits of the age was an eager desire for bringing together personal relics from the bodies of the dead who had won a great name for holiness and purity of life. With this was joined a firm conviction that these relics guarded their possessors from mischief, and a belief, more or less distinctly shaped, that events still to come were foreshown by signs of good or evil omen.

Harold may have been less a slave to these feelings and fancies than other men were; but he did not rise altogether above them. The last gifts which he offered on the altar of the church at Waltham were relics; and when, on leaving the choir, he reached the great western doorway, he bowed low, it is said, before the Holy Rood of Waltham, which was placed above it.

fortified, strengthened
adversary, enemy
virtue, right
issue, result
conviction, belief

jealousy, suspicion
treachery, false dealing,
breach of faith
held aloof, kept apart,
would not join

labourers foreshown
disunion marring
existence roused

determined purity
distinctly mischief
belief probably



LESSON 23.

THE MARCH TO SENLAC.

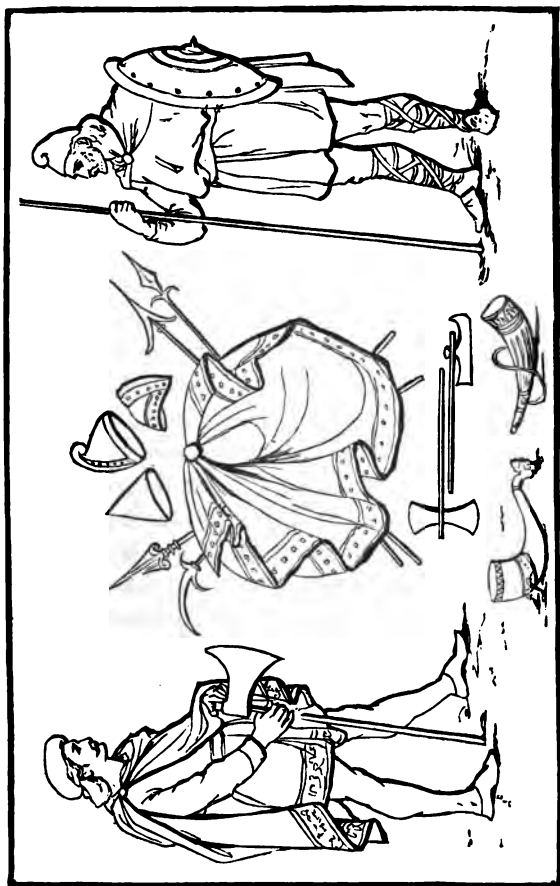
PART II.

The Holy Rood—Truth and fiction joined in the story—Gyrth's advice—Refused by Harold—His reasons—Showing his goodness but not greatness as a general.

THE Holy Rood of Waltham was a cross, or rather crucifix, which was supposed to have wrought many miracles, and another miracle was, as they thought, added to the list this day. As the king sank on his knees before it, the image of the Redeemer, we are told, bent forward and bowed itself toward his prostrate form.

This token of coming woe was not seen by the king, whose eyes were fixed on the ground; it was beheld by one man only, but many who had known the Rood of Waltham before were ready to declare that only from the moment when Harold knelt before it had the head of the image been bowed forwards.

In the accounts of this terrible time, truth and fiction are strangely blended, and we can depend



English warriors, arms, etc. before the Conquest.

on little more than the leading outlines of the story, in which all the chronicles agree. So we cannot be sure that before the king finally left London, his brother Gyrth, the Earl of East Anglia, gave him counsel, some of which he would have done well to follow.

His advice, we are told, was that Harold should remain at Westminster and recruit his strength after all his toils in the north, while Gyrth should go and fight with the Norman duke. No oath taken, willingly or by force, weighed on Gyrth's conscience; he had never said a word which acknowledged William as his over-lord; and if he should fall in the battle, Harold would still remain to avenge him, and deliver the land from the plunderer. But most of all would he be furthering the true interests of his subjects if he gave orders for throwing the country between London and Hastings into a desert. He should spare nothing; and the destruction of all food throughout this region would be the ruin of the invading army.

Harold, it is said, would listen to none of this counsel. He could not let his friends face danger which he was afraid to share. About the wasting of the land he spoke more vehemently. 'Never,' he said, 'will I burn an English village or an English house; never will

I harm the lands or the goods of any Englishman. How can I do hurt to the folk who are put under me to govern? How can I plunder and harass those whom I should see thrive under my sway?’

We cannot be sure that Gyrrh gave this advice, or that Harold returned this answer. But it is certain that a more able general would have thought of this plan, and would have carried it out.

Such a general would have known that by so doing he was not really hurting or harming the people, who might be recompensed for their loss by the state, which would be saved by them. Harold’s speech may be evidence of the goodness of his heart; but the story of these his last days shows that we cannot place him in the ranks of the greatest leaders, by the side of Hannibal or Nelson, Alexander the Great or Napoleon.

chronicles, histories, writings	fiction, falsehood		
vehemently, forcibly	recompensed, rewarded		
harass, annoy	evidence, sign		
	region, district		
prostrate	recruit	furthering	throughout
miracles	conscience	finally	knelt
wrought	acknowledged	strangely	plunderer



LESSON 24.

THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIGHT AT SENLAC.

Harold's camp—William offers to fight Harold singly—Why he made the offer—Both English and Normans determined to fight—The night before the battle—Reasons for spending it in different ways—How we judge the matter—Norman story true—Harold's address to the English.

A LITTLE more than a fortnight had passed after the fight at Stamford Bridge when Harold posted his army on the rising-ground known as Senlac, on which now stands the abbey and the town of Battle.

The spot was chosen with singular skill. It was one which would compel the Norman duke, if he fought, to fight at a great disadvantage, and which he could not venture to pass by without fighting. The lower land which lay beneath the English camp was little better than a morass, and through this the Normans would have to make their way in any attempt to drive the English from the hill.

It was at this time, we are told, that William sent a final message to Harold, offering him a choice of three things. He might fulfil his promise by at once yielding up the crown ;



Arms and armour (Norman and Saxon).

or he might hold the kingdom under William as his over-lord ; or he might leave the question to the issue of a single combat.

The English king, it is said, refused all these

offers. If they were made, they were made with the purpose which William had kept steadily in view from the beginning. It was his one great care to exhibit himself as a man fighting for the cause of righteousness, while his adversary was a servant of the prince of darkness. He himself was the loyal son of the Pope, who had blessed his enterprise, and sent him a hallowed banner, which should guard him in the fight. On his enemy the curse of the Church and of all good men rested, as on a criminal who was perjured; and his enterprise was directed not against the English people, but personally against the man who had broken his solemnly plighted faith.

Such language was, no doubt, a most useful and convenient weapon; but probably he never supposed that it could do anything more with Harold than to rouse his anger. He knew that Harold was king not by any act of his own, not by the request of the Confessor, but by the choice of the people. The crown was not Harold's to give away; and if he should dare to give it away, the English would still fight for their freedom. And so too, if the Norman duke should fall in the duel, it was in the highest degree unlikely that his followers would return to their own land without striking a blow for the

goodly prize which they had crossed the sea to win.

The great battle which decided the fate of England was fought on October 14, the feast day of St. Calixtus.

The night which went before it had been spent by the Normans, we are told, in prayer, and in the confession of their sins ; by the English, in profane singing and drinking. But it has been well said that these charges are constantly brought by the victors against the vanquished ; and the French, on the eve of the battle of Agincourt, are said to have behaved just like the English on the eve of the fight at Senlac.

If the story be true, there was in this instance a very sufficient reason for the difference. The English were plainly doing their duty, a duty to which they need not be stirred by any special excitement. With the Normans, if the enterprise was not strictly a religious work, it was nothing, or rather it was a sin. Everything, therefore, must be done to convince the army that they were in truth a legion of saintly missionaries, charged to teach the English at the sword's point the first principles of morality and religion.

But on neither side do we judge of the merits of the combatants by the words ad-

dressed to them by their leaders. Seldom indeed are both sides discharging their duty conscientiously, and the one who is more in the wrong is pretty sure to be the one who will speak loudest of his mission as an avenger of wrongs.

We may therefore accept, as fairly true, the Norman story, which represents the duke as dwelling again and again on the perjury of Harold, and as going back to crimes committed, or supposed to be committed, by him or by his father before the Confessor was seated on the English throne.

Nor need we give less credit to the reports of the speech which the English king addressed to his men, because they agree entirely with the tactics which he employed throughout this southern campaign, and are fully borne out by the incidents of the day.

He told them simply that their position was entirely different from that of the Normans. These were the assailants, and it was for them to make the attack. The English were merely defending themselves and their country, and their task was to stand firm. If they did so, they must conquer; if they broke their ranks, their defeat and ruin were practically insured. Their safety lay in keeping the enemy from their stockade; and if, obeying his order, they

kept their ground, the Normans would never be able to force their way in.

singular, remarkable	combatants, those who
plighted, pledged	take part in fights
convenient, ready	tactics, devices, plans
stockade, barriers made of	assailants, persons who
posts	attack
profane, not pure	incidents, events

disadvantage	sufficient	practically	morality
righteousness	conscientiously	insured	exhibit
personally	campaign	principals	enterprise
special	missionaries	criminal	weapon





LESSON 25.

THE FIGHT AT SENLAC.

PART I.

Another good omen for William—Taillefer begins the battle—Time of the battle—Goes against the Normans—They make a second attack—Harold's brothers are killed—He only is left.

THE last preparations were now made on either side. The Norman duke called for his coat of mail. As he put it on, the forepart was by some mischance turned hindmost. The sign seemed not less discouraging than his stumble on the beach when he landed from the *Mora*; but with the same readiness which he then showed, he now declared the omen to be a good one. The turning of the armour betokened that the owner of it would soon be changed from a duke into a king.

If we are to believe the tale, the minstrel Taillefer obtained his leave to strike the first blow. Shouting verses from the lay of Roland and of Charlemagne, and throwing his sword up in the air to show his skill in catching it



The fight at Sēnlac.

again, he advanced towards the English barrier, and having struck down one or perhaps two men, was forthwith slain.

The fight now began in earnest, and the struggle was one of the fiercest of which the history of any country has retained a record. The Norman attack was made at nine o'clock in the morning, and the shades of evening were fast closing in when the death of the heroic English king decided the issue of the day. It was decided for the precise reason of which Harold had forewarned his soldiers at the outset.

So long as his orders were obeyed, all went well for the English. The Norman host was in dire confusion, and the confusion was deepened into dismay when the rumour spread that the duke had fallen. The day was indeed all but lost, when William, tearing the helmet from his face, cried out, 'Madmen! you are flying into death; victory lies behind you! I live still, and by God's help I will yet conquer.'

At length the Norman line was formed again, and they advanced to a second attack, in which William tried to reach Harold and settle their quarrel in person. His horse was killed by the lance of Harold's brother, Gyrth; but in another moment Gyrth was slain, crushed by a blow from William's mace. His death was followed immediately by that of Leofric.

Of the three heroic sons of Earl Godwin who had stood by the English standard, Harold was now the only one left. But so long as Harold lived, there might be not only hope, but a reasonable expectation of victory.

betokened, showed
heroic, brave
confusion, disorder
reasonable, proper

precise, exact
forewarned, informed be-
forehand
record, account

preparations
discouraging
fiercest

deepened
immediately
expectation

history
retained
barrier

forthwith
declared
readiness





LESSON 26.

THE FIGHT AT SENLAC.

PART II.

William resolves to try cunning—Normans feign flight—English follow and lose ground—William's second trick—Harold is killed—Housecarls killed—English cause lost—What became of Harold's body.

THE day was wearing on, and William's heart was beginning to sink within him, when the thought struck him that cunning might do what brute force had failed to accomplish. He had already seen, early in the battle, that the flight of some troops of Bretons had tempted the English who were opposed to them to come down from the vantage-ground in chase of the fugitives; and he was aware that, unless he could effect an entrance within the English stockade, there was no hope of success for the Normans.

He therefore gave orders to some of his troops to feign a flight, and to others, that while

these should draw the English after them, they should rush in by the space so left open.

The trick was rewarded with a fatal success. Harold's orders were again disobeyed by his light-armed troops, and although they fought nobly to retrieve their error, the strength of their original position could not be recovered.



Knight on horseback.

But the issue of the day was still very doubtful, and Harold was still alive and unwounded, when William ordered his archers to shoot their arrows high into the air. The iron shower soon made awful execution in the English ranks.

An arrow struck Harold in the eye, piercing his brain. His axe fell from his hand, and in

a few minutes the undaunted English king lay dead. Norman knights thronged around him, and Norman gentlemen were not ashamed to hack and hew his body by way of taking vengeance for what they called his perjury.

The death of the king was followed by the slaughter of all his housecarls. The ranks of the light-armed were utterly broken, and they made their way as best they could from the field, inflicting as they went such blows on the pursuers as to fill them still with fear that even now they might be defeated.

Harold was dead ; but even then the work of conquest for William was scarcely more than begun. Had Harold lived, it is more than likely that, even though the day was lost at Senlac, William's enterprise would have ended in complete discomfiture. But there was none to take his place ; and for the moment no one was suffered even to give to his body the rites of Christian burial.

To the prayer of Harold's mother that he should allow the body to be borne to the church of his minster at Waltham, William answered, it is said, 'He guarded the shores of England while he lived ; let him guard them still, now that he is dead.'

He could have uttered no worthier epitaph over the fallen hero ; but after a time he seems

to have relented, for there can be as little doubt that the body was reverently laid to rest near the high altar at Waltham, as that it had at first been covered by a great heap of stones on the coast of Sussex.

cunning, trickery
feign, pretend
retrieve, repair
relented, given way
undaunted, undismayed

pursuers, followers
discomfiture, defeat
epitaph, inscription upon
a tombstone
vengeance, revenge

accomplish
fugitives
vantage

entrance
disobeyed
execution

strength
ashamed
doubtful

vengeance
worthier
reverently





LESSON 27.

THE CORONATION OF THE CONQUEROR.

PART I.

The Witan choose Edgar king—Difficult to tell why—Northern earls again hold aloof—English cause therefore hopeless—Peace made with William.

BY his victory at Hastings, or, as we should rather say, Senlac, William had left the English people without a king. There still remained the young Prince Edgar, of whom we should be apt to speak as the rightful heir by line of descent. But we cannot say that our modern notions of succession were even known to our forefathers in those days. If they were known, they were disregarded as often as they were followed. It was the choice of the people, and the solemn crowning in the church, which gave the monarch such power as he possessed as a sovereign. In this instance the Witan chose to go by the line of descent, and they offered the crown to Edgar.

It is not easy to understand all that happened

in this strange time ; and it is especially difficult to understand how the great council thought that they would be able to uphold their choice. The man who had conquered Harold was still in the country with his victorious army, and they might see him any day before the gates of London. Edgar was little more than a child, and wholly unfit to deal with the sea of troubles which had burst upon the land. They may have supposed that the very youth and weakness of Edgar might induce the Conqueror to withdraw the claim which he had urged against Harold.

It is more likely that the presence of the two great northern earls, Edwin and Morcar, with their forces, might lead them to think that the united English people would still be more than a match for the invader. But Edwin and Morcar had no idea of an English nation, and not the least care for it. They were ready to assent to the election of Edgar, as they had assented to the election of Harold ; but they had no intention of fighting for either, and they withdrew their forces now, as they had held aloof when they left Harold to deal as best he could with his namesake of Norway at Stamford Bridge.

Meanwhile the Norman duke was strengthening his hold on the land ; and as after the submission of Dover and Canterbury he marched



Coronation of William the Conqueror.

towards London, it must have become plain that something more must be done.

If the English could not withstand him, they must submit ; and if they must submit, no other way was open to them than to have William for their king.

The desertion of the treacherous northern earls made the notion of armed resistance hopeless. Edgar had been chosen king, but he had not been crowned ; and without the crowning he might have the name of king, but not his authority.

Some of the great council resolved to make their peace with William, and Edgar himself accompanied the ambassadors who bowed to the invader 'for need,' the sore need which left them no freedom in the matter.

They had never lived, they said, except under a crowned king, and they may have comforted themselves with the thought that in William they might have a second Cnut. After taking counsel with his chief men, William accepted the offer, and Christmas day was fixed for the crowning.

ambassadors, messengers	induce, lead
from one king to another	desertion, forsaking
invader, one who enters a	authority, power
country with a hostile	accompanied, went along
intention	with
disregarded	instance
modern	especially
monarch	difficult
	victorious
	wholly
	assent
	strengthened
	resistance
	accepted



LESSON 28.

THE CORONATION OF THE CONQUEROR.

PART II.

Contrast between William's and Harold's coronation—A tumult arises—Its effect—Norman excuse for it—False—What the tumult really was—Time of oppression near.

ON Christmas day 1066, the great church of the Confessor witnessed one of the saddest sights on which the eyes of man may rest—a sight the more sad and mournful for its outward pomp and glory.

The English who took part in the splendid ceremony had witnessed the same ceremony not twelve months ago within the same walls. *Then* they had shouted assent to the question which had asked them whether they would have a true-hearted Englishman for their king; *now* they were there to raise their voices in favour of one who came as a conqueror, that is, as one who

looked on the crown as his by right, and who had crossed the sea to make his claim good. *Then* Englishmen stood armed in front of the great church ; *now* the ground was held by Norman guards. *Then* there were Englishmen only who were to be asked if they approved the choice of the Witan ; *now* there was a multitude of foreigners to whom the same question must be put in French.

The shout which gave the answer to this question was followed by a terrible tumult outside the walls of the church. The Norman soldiers stationed round the building set fire to the nearest houses, and gave themselves up to the work of plunder.

Of the fact of the tumult there is no doubt. It emptied the church of all except the monks of the abbey and those who were taking part in the ceremony. The Norman portion of the congregation thought that the inhabitants of London were risen against them in a body ; the English feared that they were caught like wild beasts in a snare and were to be the victims of a general massacre.

It seems certain that the Conqueror had nothing to do with the tumult. The prelates and clergy who remained with him to complete the rites were almost palsied with fear ; and even

William himself, we are told, trembled as he knelt before the high altar.

The excuse given for the conduct of the Norman guards was that they took the acclamations of the crowd within the church for shouts of insurrection.

The falsehood is manifest ; for if they feared for the life of the king within the church, why, instead of hurrying to his defence, should they go off to plunder and destroy in another direction ? Their fears were pretended ; but the robbery and pillaging were real enough.

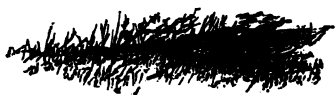
It was, in fact, an outbreak of Norman soldiers against military discipline ; and the words addressed by the Conqueror immediately after it to his barons seem to show that he himself regarded it as such. He told them that such conduct, if repeated, would madden the English into a general rebellion, and bring utter shame on themselves and on their country.

The English were now to see what manner of man he was whom they had chosen as their king ; but it is very necessary for us to remember that, though William was a usurper, he received his crown as the elect of the people. A dark time of oppression was in store for his subjects ; but the forms of freedom were not

laid aside, and might hereafter again become realities.

ceremony, rite, show	palsied, rendered helpless,
foreigners, natives of other	as if diseased with palsy
countries	insurrection, uprising
congregation, assembly in	discipline, law and order
a church	usurper, one who takes a
rebellion, rising	place to which he has
rites, religious forms	no right
acclamation, shouts of joy	elect, chosen

witnessed	inhabitants	military	immediately
mournful	massacre	realities	complete
multitude	robbery	pretended	pillaging





LESSON 29.

THE CAMP OF REFUGE.

PART I.

Truth and fiction again mixed—Conquest of England took years to complete—Hereward's resistance became revolt—Danish king bribed—The Isle of Ely.

THE traditions of the time make much of the bravery and the exploits of Hereward. The character of the stories told of him shows us how strangely truth and fiction may be mixed together in an age in which a knowledge of events is preserved almost as much by the talk of the people as by the pen of the chronicler.

By his victory at Senlac, and by his crowning at Westminster, the Norman duke had made good his claim to the title of Conqueror; but he was master yet of only a small part of England. The subjugation of the rest was a work which it took him three years to achieve; and even when it was achieved, it could by no

means be said that all resistance to him was at an end.

But the position of those who resisted him was now changed. The efforts of the men of Exeter and other towns must be regarded as the open warfare of men against a power which they do not recognise. The stand made against him by Hereward in the Isle of Ely can be looked upon only as revolt or insurrection.

William was master of the whole country to the borders of Cornwall; and throughout its whole extent his authority was established more firmly than that of any of the kings who had preceded him. Under such circumstances resistance becomes rebellion; and the question to be answered is, whether the rebellion was justified by the circumstances under which the rebels found themselves.

Against some enemies William found that money could do much more than force. In this way he bribed off the commanders of the fleet which the Danish King Swend had sent in the hope of wresting England from the grasp of the Conqueror (1070). By the agreement made with these commanders the fleet was to pass the winter in England, and no complaint was to be made if they plundered the coasts, so long as they kept clear of actual fighting with any of the king's troops.

But in the spring they appeared not on the coast, but in the waters of the Isle of Ely, which was not then, as it is now, an island only in name. The ground above which towers the mighty mass of the minster church rises almost as a steep hill above the surrounding country. At the time of the Norman conquest much of this land was permanently under water, and on that portion of it which remained uncovered a small band of resolute men might bid defiance to a large attacking force.

Here, four years after the fight at Hastings, we find Hereward suddenly heading a determined resistance to the power of the Norman king.

traditions, verbal stories	subjugation, subduing,
exploits, deeds	conquering
chronicler, historian	achieved, accomplished
permanently, lastingly	bid defiance, successfully
minster church, church of	resist
a monastery	authority, power

recognise	justified	resistance	possibility
insurrection	bribed	wresting	actual
determined	preserved	preceded	circumstances
knowledge	regarded	justified	rebellion



LESSON 30.

THE CAMP OF REFUGE.

PART II.

Hereward plunders Peterborough monastery—Joined by Edwin—Edwin killed—Morcar no help—The great struggle—Morcar a prisoner—Escape of Hereward—His death—His rebellion of no service to England.

HEREWARD is said to have done great things, such as are told of the Scottish champion William Wallace, but who he was, or whence he had come, we know not. In the great book of Domesday, drawn up by William's order, which contains the names of all the landholders of England, the name of Hereward appears among the owners of land in Lincolnshire and Warwick; but for some reason or other he had spent some time in exile—where, we cannot say.

When we come to look into the story, we find it prosy enough. The monastery of Peterborough had a Norman abbot; but although he and his monks were living peaceably, his being a Norman was held to be a sufficient reason

for plundering and burning all the conventual buildings, and driving out the inmates.

Shortly after this, Hereward was joined by one of the two great northern earls, whose faithlessness to King Harold was the true cause of William's victory at Senlac.

These two earls, Edwin and Morcar, left William's court, we are told, and acted openly as rebels. For a time they wandered about in woods or forest land, until Edwin, trying to make his way to Scotland, was surprised on the road and slain. His death sheds no lustre on a disgraceful career. He was, it has been well said, a man who betrayed every cause which he undertook, and broke his faith to every lord to whom he plighted it.

Hereward, it would seem, was not much strengthened by the presence of Earl Morcar. There was no likelihood, it might almost be said no possibility, that he could do more than maintain his own independence within his camp of refuge. How long he maintained it is uncertain, although his resistance was strong enough to bring William himself to the spot.

The great struggle took place at the Aldreth Causeway, thrown up by William's orders on the southern side of the island. Here, one strange story tells us, a witch was placed in a wooden tower, to render the English helpless

by her spells ; but Hereward contrived to set the tower on fire, and the witch died in the flames.

The next scene shows us Morcar as a prisoner ; but the causes which led to his surrender are unknown.

Hereward himself escaped by water, and sailed into the open sea ; and from this moment he vanishes into a darkness greater than that which rests on his earlier career. He remained an outlaw, we are told, and married a rich Englishwoman, by whose aid he made his peace with the king. But even William himself, it seems, could not defend him against his enemies.

Hereward had to guard himself in his own house ; but one day the watchman slumbered at his post, and a band of Normans rushed in. Hereward was unarmed and unprepared ; but he seized such weapons as were at hand, and had slain fifteen of his assailants, when four more smote him in the back. Another now smote off his head, saying that if there had been three more in the land like him, England would not have been conquered.

This impossible story places Hereward in the ranks of those heroes who have lived only in popular legends. Of the real Hereward, who defended Ely, we can only say that his

132 STORIES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

rebellion brought no benefit to his countrymen,
and reflected no great credit on himself.

conventual, belonging to a convent	assailants, those who attack
exile, banishment	legends, stories
outlaw, one who cannot claim the protection of the law	benefit, profit
	credit, honour
	spells, words supposed to have magical power

exile	prosy	faithlessness	career
possibility	escaped	earlier	assailants
reflected	independence	unprepared	strengthened





LESSON 31.

THE DEATH OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

William claims Normandy—Philip's jests make him angry—Mantes burned—William is injured—His penitence—His confession.

THE body of Harold had lain in the grave for more than twenty years, when the Conqueror found himself entangled in a quarrel with the French king, whose man he was for the dukedom of Normandy (1087).

The border-land between France and Normandy, called the Vexin, had been given, he said, long ago to his father Robert ; it had been taken back during the troubled times of his own childhood. But now, after all these years, French commanders dared to cross the Norman borders and harry the country of the Norman duke. William sent to the French king to demand due recompense for the mischief done to his land, and to tell him that he must yield up the whole of the Vexin.

His threats were terrible ; but the French king knew that the duke was ill, and he thought

that he need not dread his anger. As he grew older, William had grown fat, and his body was now swollen to so huge a size that he had gone to Rouen, where he hoped that his physicians might enable him to bring down its unwieldy bulk.

King Philip of France made a poor jest on William's condition. William, fiercely angry, declared that his vengeance should set all France in a blaze; and his conduct showed that his fury had completely upset the balance of his temper.

The harvest was just ripe when he burst into the border-land with his men, ravaging and plundering everywhere. But his most awful vengeance fell on the town of Mantes. This he destroyed utterly.

Mantes is still a fine city, with great churches and buildings; but not a stone remains of any of the buildings which were standing in William's day. All the houses were set on fire, and the monks and nuns who would not leave their cells died in the flames.

The Conqueror was in a frenzy of joy, and he charged his men to heap on fuel to make the merrier blaze. As he thus glutted his savage rage, his horse stumbled, either on the edge of a ditch, or on the burning embers, and, throwing him violently forward on the iron pommel of his

saddle, gave him some experience of the agonies which the human frame may be made to suffer.

This was William's last exploit. He returned to Rouen a dying man ; but, unable to bear the noise of the city, he had himself taken to the priory of St. Gervaise, on a hill to the west of the town. Here he went through all the forms which were thought to be needed for a seemly Christian death-bed.

If words were worth much, William's peni-



Norman coin—silver penny of
William I.

tence was edifying enough. He confessed his sins, and he made his will, disposing of everything except the crown of England.

This, he said, he dared not himself bestow on any one, although he hoped that it might be placed on the head of his son William, in whom he had never found a failure in the duty due from a son to a father.

If these words meant anything, they meant that the claim which he had based on the Confessor's bequest was a mere pretence, and that his work of conquest had been a work of wrong. In his confession he is made to recount the crimes of which he had been guilty in the kingdom thus unrighteously gotten. It is a fearful

list ; and many tears, and the penitence of a life-time spent in dust and ashes, would, we might think, be needed to wipe out the blackness of its infamy.

entangled, mixed up
unwieldy, big, huge
frenzy, madness

pommel, the raised part
on the front of a saddle
bequest, legacy

troubled
recompense
swollen

physicians
everywhere
violently

exploit
penitence
infamy

pretence
unrighteously
experience





LESSON 32.

THE FUNERAL OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

William's death—Body carried to Caen—The knight's claim—
Settled by the bishop—Body bursts on being put into coffin—
Shrine and epitaph.

WILLIAM died commending his soul to the holy mother of God ; and his death was a signal for the lords around him to secure their safety by flight, and to their followers to plunder his chambers. So carefully was the work of the latter done, that the corpse was left almost stripped of all clothing on the floor ; nor could any one be found to carry it away for burial, until a man named Herlwin came forward of his own will to do so.

Thus it was brought to Caen, to be placed in the church of the minster of St. Stephen, which he had founded. After the mass for the dead, the Bishop of Evreux preached a sermon, in which he asked their prayers for the welfare of his soul, and bade his hearers

forgive any wrong which they might themselves have received at his hands.

At these words a knight named Ascelin, starting up from the crowd, declared that William had by force taken from his father the ground on which they were now standing. 'I claim the land,' he said, 'and in the name of God I forbid that the body of the robber be covered with my mould, or that he be buried within the bounds of my inheritance.'

To the question of the bishop, those of the bystanders who knew Ascelin replied by saying that his story was true; but no further proof was given, and we can neither assert its truth nor prove its falsehood.

Time pressed, and the bishop at once made a bargain with Ascelin. Sixty shillings were given to him for the few feet of ground scooped out for the grave, and a promise, immediately fulfilled, was made that he should receive the full price of the estate of which, as he declared, his father had been robbed by William.

When this matter was settled, it remained only to remove the body from the wooden bier into the stone coffin within which it was to be buried. The coffin was found to be too small, and as the bearers strove to force it in, the swollen body burst, and a horrible sight and stench closed the last scene in

the great drama of the Conqueror's life and death.

A splendid shrine was raised over his tomb, but (we cannot tell why) the epitaph placed upon it made no mention of England ; and the bystander, as he read the lines, could not gather from the words that the man whose body lay beneath had been not only a Norman duke but an English king.

inheritance, possession
scooped, hollowed out
stench, bad smell

drama, a play
estate, portion of land
assert, state

safety
burial
received

declared
buried
bystanders

neither
falsehood
horrible

conqueror
splendid
epitaph





LESSON 33.

THE RED KING.

Rufus chosen king—Norman nobles, especially Odo, very sorry—
Odo plots against him—Nobles rebel—Rufus determines to get
Normandy—The Crusades.

THE Conqueror's wishes for his son William, who from the ruddiness of his complexion was called Rufus or the Red, were fulfilled. The English, indeed, were all eager to have him for their king, partly because any change of rulers is to a conquered people likely to appear a change for the better, and partly because there seemed to be something like a promise of freedom for England in the fact that William was not his father's successor in the dukedom of Normandy.

But that which brought hope to the English brought little pleasure to the Normans who had become lords of rich domains in England. Least of all did it bring pleasure to Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent, who with his huge war-club had shown the strength of

his arm at Senlac, and who, having there fought by the side of his brother, was by that brother thrown into a prison, from which he was released only by William's dying words at the priory of St. Gervaise.

The Conqueror had acted from a true instinct in thus restraining the man who had sought to win the papacy itself, that so he might become mightier even than his mighty brother.

But he had come out from his prison with his spirit unbroken and unchanged, and he had no mind to be second in the English kingdom under the red king, of whose vigour and genius he was well aware. He spoke to his fellow-nobles of the great benefits which would be theirs if Normandy and England could still be held by one ruler, and if, by having Duke Robert, they could have a sovereign who, from the weakness and easiness of his disposition, would be a ruler only in name.

His words fell on willing ears. The barons rose in rebellion, and the sight was seen of Englishmen standing stoutly by their Norman king against his Norman countrymen. To Rufus their help was a matter of life and death, and he was loud in promises of good and righteous government. The promises were not kept, perhaps he never meant to keep them ; but the words had been spoken, and they were remem-

bered, nor were they without use in helping the English people to win back their freedom.

The red king's notions were, in truth, much the same as those of his uncle Odo. He too thought that England and Normandy should be ruled by one man, but he was determined that, if it were possible, that man should be himself. He was ready to wait for the opportunity, and the opportunity was not long in coming.

It was a time when all Europe was being stirred by the impulse which drove men to go forth to the Holy Land, and do battle with the Infidel for the holy places which he had defiled, and from which he sought to shut out the faithful. The preaching of the hermit Peter was followed by the appeal of Pope Urban the Second, calling on all who heard him to put on the cross, and pledge themselves to a work which would make their salvation sure.

ruddiness, redness
domains, lands
impulse, force
restraining, keeping back

complexion, hue of the
skin
crusades, holy wars

fulfilled
released
stirred

benefits
papacy
determined

genius
easiness
successor

disposition
opportunity
pleasure

TABLE OF ENGLISH, DANISH, AND NORMAN KINGS.

—o— ENGLISH KINGS.

	Began to reign.	Ceased to reign.
Egbert (<i>son of Ealhmund, king of Kent</i>),	A. D. 827	A. D. 836
Ethelwulf (<i>son</i>),	,, 836	,, 856
Ethelbald (<i>son</i>),	,, 856	,, 860
Ethelbert (<i>brother</i>),	,, 860	,, 866
Ethelred I. (<i>brother</i>),	,, 866	,, 871
Alfred the Great (<i>brother</i>),	,, 871	,, 901
Edward the Elder (<i>son</i>),	,, 901	,, 924
Athelstan (<i>son</i>),	,, 924	,, 941
Edmund (<i>brother</i>),	,, 941	,, 946
Edred (<i>brother</i>),	,, 946	,, 955
Edwy (<i>nephew</i>),	,, 955	,, 959
Edgar (<i>brother</i>),	,, 959	,, 975
Edward II. (<i>son</i>),	,, 975	,, 978
Ethelred II. (<i>brother</i>),	,, 978	,, 1013

(Owing to a massacre of the Danes, Ethelred was driven from the throne, and SWEYN, king of Denmark, became king ; but Ethelred was recalled in 1014, and reigned till 1016.)

Edmund Ironside (<i>son of Ethelred II.</i>),	,, 1016	,, 1016
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DANISH KINGS.

Cnut (Canute) (<i>son of Sweyn</i>),	,, 1016	,, 1035
Harold (<i>son</i>),	,, 1035	,, 1040
Hardicanute (<i>brother</i>),	,, 1040	,, 1042

ENGLISH KINGS RESTORED.

Edward the Confessor (<i>son of Ethelred II.</i>),	,, 1042	,, 1066
Harold (<i>son of Earl Godwin</i>),	,, 1066	,, 1066

NORMAN KINGS.

William I. (the Conqueror) (<i>son of Robert le Diable</i>),	,, 1066	,, 1087
William II. (Rufus) (<i>son</i>),	,, 1087	,, 1100
Henry I. (Beauclerc) (<i>brother</i>),	,, 1100	,, 1135
Stephen (<i>nephew</i>),	,, 1135	,, 1154

PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF ENGLAND.



Roman invasion under Julius Cæsar,	B.C.	55
Real conquest by Romans begun,	A.D.	43
Caradoc (Caractacus), a British chief, defeated, .	„	51
Defeat and death of Boadicea,	„	61
Hengist and other Saxon leaders came to England,	„	449
Augustine and other missionaries arrive, . .	„	596
Egbert becomes King of Wessex,	„	800
Egbert becomes Overlord of England,	„	827
Danes visit England,	„	867
Alfred the Great is crowned,	„	871
Quarrels of Edwy and Dunstan,	„	955
England conquered by Danes,	„	1017
Harold becomes king ; the battle of Senlac (Hast- ings) ; and William the Conqueror crowned, .	„	1066

